جمهورية مصر العربية
وزارة التربية والتعليم والتعليم الفني
قطاع الكتب

The Prisoner of Zenda



By

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Retold by
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Chapter 1

I was eating breakfast in the dining room of my brother's house one sunny morning, thinking about what I would do that week, when my brother's wife Rose came into the room.

"Rudolf, you're 29 years old," she said. "Are you ever going to do anything useful?"

"Rose," I answered, putting down my egg spoon, "why should I do anything? I have nearly enough money to do anything I want to (no one ever has quite enough money to do that, of course), and I enjoy an important position in society: my brother's Lord Burlesdon and you are a countess."

"But you've done nothing except…"

"Be lazy? It's true. I'm a member of the Rassendyll family and our family don't need to do things."

This annoyed Rose, because her family were rich but less important than the Rassendylls.

At this moment, my brother Lord Burlesdon (who we were happy to call simply Robert) came into the room.

"Robert, I'm so happy you're back!" cried Rose.

"What's the matter, my dear?" Robert asked her.

"She's angry because she thinks I don't do anything," I explained to my brother.

At this point, I should explain that I had not been lazy all my life. I had studied hard and learned a lot when I was at a German school and German university. I spoke German as well as I spoke English, and I also knew how to speak French, Italian and Spanish. I was good with a gun and a strong **swordsman**. I was also very good at riding a horse.

"It's not just your red hair that makes you different from your brother," said Rose. "He also realises his position in society has responsibilities.

You only see opportunities in yours."

"To a man like me, opportunities are responsibilities," I explained.

"Good, because I have some news for you," said Rose. "Sir Jacob Borrodaile tells me he'll offer you a real opportunity. He's going to be an **ambassador** in six months' time, and he says he's happy for you to work for him. I hope you'll take this job, Rudolf."

My sister-in-law has a way of asking people to do things which is impossible to refuse. **Moreover**, I thought this job sounded quite interesting, so I said, "If in six months' time I'm in a position to take this job, then I'll certainly say yes."

"Oh, Rudolf, how good of you!" said Rose.

"Where will he be working?" I asked.

"Sir Jacob doesn't know which country it will be, but he's sure it'll be a good **embassy**."

"For you I'll do it, even if it's a terrible embassy," I replied.

Now I had made my promise to Rose, but there were still six months to go before the job would start, and I began to think about what I could do in this time. I decided that I would visit Ruritania, a small country in the middle of Europe.

My family have always had an interest in that country because in 1733, Countess Amelia Rassendyll married a member of the Ruritanian **royal** family, the Elphbergs. In fact my brother has paintings of her and her **descendants** on his walls: many of them have the same red hair and straight noses as the Elphbergs; I am the latest one to have the appearance of the Ruritanian royal family.

My decision was helped a few days later when I read in *The Times* newspaper that Rudolf the Fifth was to become King of Ruritania in the next three weeks, and that amazing celebrations were planned for this **joyous** occasion. I thought how fantastic it would be to see such an event and began to prepare for my journey.

I do not like to tell people where I go on my travels, so I told Rose that I was going walking in the Alps. I did not want her to think I was being lazy either, so I told her I was going to write a book about social problems in the country.

"You're going to write a book? That would be such a good thing to do, wouldn't it, Robert?" said Rose.

"Yes, indeed. Writing a book's the best way to get into politics," agreed Robert, and he should know, as he has written many books himself.

"You're right," I said to them both. However, I had no plan to really write a book, which shows how little we know about the future. Because here I am now, writing a book as I had promised to do, even if the book has nothing to do with the social problems in the Alps. But let me begin near the start of my journey to Ruritania.

My Uncle William always said that no man should ever pass through Paris without spending twenty-four hours in the city, so I took his advice and booked a night at The Continental Hotel. As soon as I had checked in, I called on some old friends that I knew in the French capital: George Featherly, who worked at the embassy, and Bertram Bertrand, who was now a famous journalist in the city. That evening, we all ate in a restaurant and they told me all about the latest exciting events in Paris.

"We've had quite a few important people visiting the city recently," said Bertram.

"Anyone I'd know?" I asked.

"Well, I met Antoinette de Mauban today," Bertram replied. "You've probably heard of her. She's a lady who's well known for her wealth and ambition. But she's leaving Paris tomorrow. We don't know where she's going to next."

"So why did she come to Paris?" I asked.

"She was a guest of the Duke of Strelsau," said George. "I met him at the embassy yesterday. He's the half-brother to the King of Ruritania. People say he was his father's favourite son. He's gone back for the

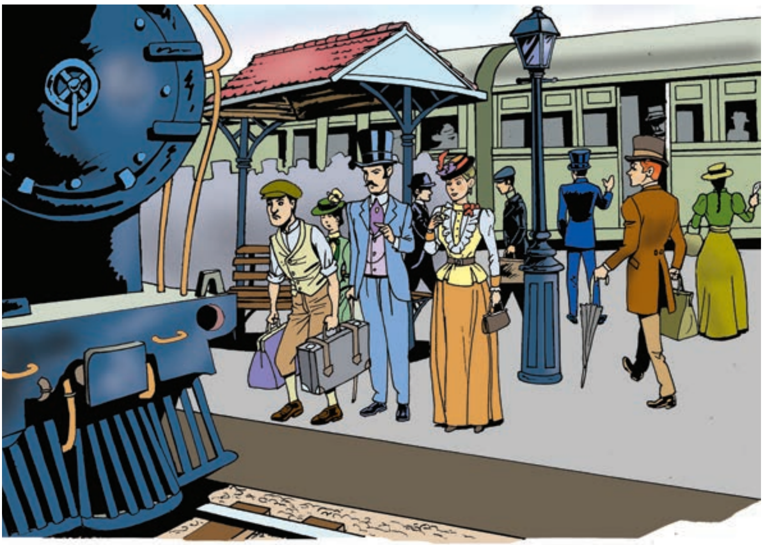
coronation, although I don't think he'll enjoy it very much because he probably wishes he were the King. I don't think he likes being only a Duke."

"I hear he's a clever man, though," said Bertram.

"He's extremely clever, I'd say," agreed George.

The next day, George came with me to the station and I bought a ticket to my next stop, Dresden. I did not tell him that I was going to Ruritania. If I had, the news would have gone immediately to Bertram and then it would have been in all the newspapers within days.

Just as I was about to get on the train, George suddenly smiled and walked away to talk to a beautiful, tall and **fashionably** dressed woman of about thirty who was standing at the ticket office with two younger women. I thought these must be her servants.



"You have an important person to travel with," George told me when he returned a few minutes later. "That's Antoinette de Mauban and she's also going to Dresden."

Paris was soon behind me. It was a long and boring journey and I **wondered** if I would see Antoinette de Mauban in the dining car when I ate in the train that evening, or perhaps at breakfast the next morning. However, I did not see the lady again until the following day, when both she and I got on the next train from Dresden to Ruritania. She was further up the train, however, and did not see me.

A few hours later, the train arrived at the Ruritanian border where we stopped so the guards could check our passports. I was surprised when the guards **stared** at me and my passport for some time before letting me into the country. Once in Ruritania, I bought a newspaper and read that the King's coronation was to be in two days' time, which was much earlier than I had thought. The newspaper described the excitement in the country and in particular the capital city, Strelsau, where it said all the hotels were full with people who wanted to see the event. On reading this, I decided it would be best to stop at Zenda, a small town eighty kilometres from the capital, and about ten kilometres from the border. Here I could walk in the hills and see the town's famous **castle**, then I could take the train for the day to Strelsau to see the coronation. As I got off the train at Zenda, I saw Antoinette de Mauban, who remained on the train for its journey to the capital, but she did not look at me.

I was welcomed at the inn in Zenda by an old woman who ran it with her two daughters. She said she was not very interested in what happened in the capital, but she loved the Duke of Strelsau, who she called Duke Michael. He was the man who was responsible for the land around Zenda and its castle. In fact, the hotel owner said she wished the Duke was the new King and not his brother.

"We all know Duke Michael," she explained. "He's always lived in Ruritania and he **cares** about the people, so people like him. As for the King, well, he's almost a stranger. He's been abroad for most of his life and not many people even know what he looks like. Now the King's

staying in a **hunting lodge** in the forest, very near to Zenda. From there he'll travel to the capital for his coronation."

I was interested to hear this, and decided I would walk in the forest the next day so that I might see him.

"I wish he'd stay there in the forest," continued the woman. "People say he only likes hunting and good food. He should let the Duke become our King. And there are many others who think the same."

"Well I don't like Duke Michael," said her older daughter. "They say the King has red hair, just like you!"

"Many men have red hair like me," I laughed.

"How do you know the King has red hair?" the old woman asked her daughter.

"Johann, the Duke's servant, told me," she explained. "He's seen the King at the hunting lodge."

"But why's the King here, if it's the Duke's land?" I asked.

"The Duke invited him, sir," explained the old lady. "The Duke's in Strelsau, preparing for the coronation."

"So they are good friends?"

"I don't know if you can be good friends if you want the same thing."

"What do you mean?"

"Duke Michael would like to be King, too, I'm sure."

"Well!" I said. "I feel quite sorry for the Duke, but it's right that the older brother becomes king."

"Who's talking of the Duke?" said a deep voice from outside the door.

"We have a guest, Johann," called the old lady, as a man entered the room. When he saw me, he took off his hat and stepped back in surprise, as though he had seen something amazing.

"What's the matter, Johann?" asked the old lady. "This gentleman's come to our country to see the coronation."

"It's the red hair," said one of the daughters. "We don't often see it in our country unless you're part of the King's family, the Elphbergs. Many of them have red hair."

The man continued to stare at me, but said, "Good evening, sir. I'm sorry, I didn't expect to see any new guests here."

"Don't worry," I said. "It's late and time I went to bed. I wish you all a good night. Thank you, ladies, for our conversation." I stood up to go to my room, when Johann suddenly said, "Sir, have you ever seen our King?"

"No, I've never seen him, but I hope to do so on Wednesday at the coronation."

Johann said no more, but I felt his eyes on me as I walked up the stairs.

The next morning, Johann seemed much more relaxed. When he heard that I was going to Strelsau, he said I could stay at his sister's house. She was married to a wealthy trader and she had invited him to stay with them for the coronation, but he was unable to go. I was very happy to have this opportunity and accepted his offer, so he said he would contact his sister at once and tell her to expect me that day.

I decided, however, that I still wanted to see the forest where the King was staying, so first I planned to walk for sixteen kilometres through the forest to the next station along the line, where I could catch a train to the capital.

I did not tell Johann about this plan, as I did not think it would be important if I arrived at his sister's later in the day. So I sent my luggage on to the station and said goodbye to the old lady and her daughters, and set off up the hill towards the castle. After that, it was a short walk to get into the forest.

Half an hour later, I reached the castle. It was very old but well built, with a **moat** all around it. Behind it was a large modern **mansion**, which was used by the Duke of Strelsau as his country home. The mansion was reached by a wide road, but the old castle could only be reached by a **drawbridge** between it and the mansion. I was pleased to see that the Duke had such a well-defended house, even if he were not to become King.

Soon I reached the dark forest and I walked for about an hour, pleased that the tall trees gave me cool **shade**: not much sun reached the ground through the many leaves. It was a beautiful place and after a time I decided to rest by lying against one of the enormous trees. It was so quiet and peaceful in the forest that I soon fell into a deep sleep, forgetting all about the train I should have caught to Strelsau and my luggage that would be waiting at the station. I was just dreaming about living in the Castle of Zenda when a voice woke me:

"Why look at him! It's amazing! He looks just like the King!"

I opened my eyes slowly and found two men looking at me. Both carried guns and were dressed for hunting. One of them was short but looked very **tough** with light blue eyes, and he looked like a soldier. The other was younger, thin and of medium height, and he looked like a gentleman. I later found out that my guesses were both correct.

The older man walked up to me and raised his hat to me politely, so I stood up.

"He's about the same height as the King, too! " he said. "This really is extraordinary. What's your name, sir?"

"Perhaps you can tell me what your names are first?" I asked them.

The gentleman stepped forward with a smile and said, "Of course. This is Colonel Sapt, and my name's Fritz von Tarlenheim. We both work for the King of Ruritania."

I shook their hands and told them, "I'm Rudolf Rassendyll. I'm a traveller from England and was an officer in the Queen's army."

"Well, we're officers for our King, so we understand each other well!" said Tarlenheim.

"Rassendyll, Rassendyll," said Colonel Sapt quietly. "I know! Are you one of the Burlesdons?"

"My brother's the new Lord Burlesdon," I explained. "So, do I really look like the King?"

"You could be twins," said Fritz.

"Although you look like **identical** twins, you do not have identical **personalities** or skills. You two seem very different. If you were an officer for the Queen's army, Rassendyll, you must be good with a **sword**!" laughed Sapt.

"Is the King not a fighting man?" I asked.

"The King likes to live well," said Fritz. "Let's say he prefers eating to action, but he's a kind man and he's our King. We'd do anything for him."

"Perhaps we are alike then," I said, "because I like to have an easy life, too!"

At this moment, a voice came from the trees behind us.

"Fritz? Where are you, Fritz?"

Fritz looked worried, and then said quietly to me, "It's the King! He's coming here now."

A young man then came out from behind a tree in the forest and stood in front of us. As I looked at him, I gave out a loud cry at the same time as he stood back in amazement to see me. Except perhaps for a centimetre



or two difference in height, we looked so alike that the King of Ruritania might have been me, Rudolf Rassendyll, and I might have been him, the King of Ruritania.

Chapter 2

It was a very strange feeling for me to be standing in a forest in the middle of Ruritania in front of a person who looked exactly the same as me. For a few minutes, the future King of Ruritania and I stood looking at each other in silence. Then I bowed to him and he finally spoke.

"Colonel, Fritz: who is this gentleman?"

I was about to answer when Colonel Sapt stepped forward and spoke quietly to the King. As the Colonel talked, the King listened patiently, staring at me now and then. While they were talking, I examined him carefully. He certainly looked very like me, although there were some differences: his mouth was perhaps less wide and my face was a little thinner. But in most ways we were identical.

Colonel Sapt stopped talking and the King suddenly began to laugh loudly. Then he stepped up to me, still laughing, and said, "It's good to meet you, cousin! You must forgive me if I seemed surprised, as it's not every day that you see your **double**!"

"I hope you're not angry," I said.

"Whether I like it or not, you can't help looking like me. No, I'll happily help you. Where are you travelling to?"

"To Strelsau, sir. To the coronation."

The King looked at the two other men and smiled.

"What would my brother Michael think if he saw us two together!" he cried.

"But sir," said Fritz von Tarlenheim, "I don't think it would be a good idea for Mr Rassendyll to visit Strelsau now."

"Really? What do you think?" the King asked Colonel Sapt.

"I agree. He mustn't go," said the old soldier.

"Don't worry, sir. I understand the problem," I said. "I'll leave Ruritania today."

"You don't need to go now!" said the King. "Please, first you must eat with me tonight. You don't meet a new cousin every day!"

"Remember, sir, that we have an early start tomorrow," said Colonel Sapt.

"We can still eat well," said the King, "and good food is more important than sleep! Now Mr Rassendyll, what's your first name?"

"The same as yours," I answered, bowing again.

"Come, then, cousin Rudolf. I don't have a house here, but I'm staying in the place my brother Michael uses for hunting. It's not the palace that I'm used to, but it will do for a few days."

So I walked with the King for half an hour through the forest, talking happily until we reached a small wooden hunting lodge between the trees. The King's personal servant came out to meet us. The other servant was the mother of Johann, the man who I had met earlier at the inn.

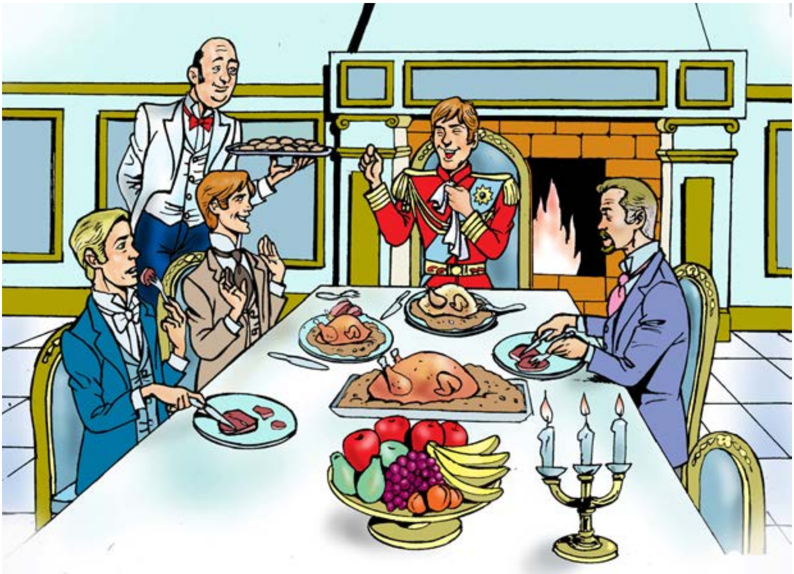
"Is dinner ready yet, Josef?" the King asked the servant.

The servant said it was and showed us into a dining room where a table had been laid out with generous amounts of food. After my walk I was hungry, so I ate a lot and the food was delicious, but I noticed that Colonel Sapt and Fritz von Tarlenheim did not want to eat too much because of the events the next day.

"The Colonel and I have to leave here at six tomorrow morning," Fritz explained. "We ride to Zenda and return with a guard of soldiers to take the King to the station."

"It's very good of my brother to let me use his guards," said the King. "But Rudolf, forget these two men! We don't need to get up so early, so eat some more, cousin!"

We continued to eat and Josef continued to bring in more food. "The Duke said I was to give you this at the end of your meal," said the servant, putting some cakes in front of us.



"Well done, Michael! He knows me well!" said the King happily, and he ate the cakes hungrily, as if they were the first thing he had eaten all day. I ate one of the cakes, but I had really eaten enough, and when the King seemed to have finally finished eating, I asked to go to bed. That is all I remember of that evening.

The next thing I remember, I woke up suddenly covered in water. I looked up and saw Colonel Sapt standing in front of me, with Fritz von Tarlenheim next to him.

"That wasn't funny," I said, when I realised the Colonel had thrown water over me.

"Nothing else would wake you up. It's five o'clock," said Sapt.

"Five o'clock? But it's early and…"

"Rassendyll," said Fritz in a worried voice, "you must come and look at this." He took my arm and led me to the next room. The King was lying on the floor. His face was red and he was breathing heavily.

"We've been trying to wake him up for half an hour, but we can't," explained Fritz.

I bent down and felt his **pulse**, which was very weak and slow.

"It must've been those cakes that he ate last night! Do you think he was poisoned?" I asked.

"We don't know," said Sapt. "We must get a doctor."

"There's no doctor for fifteen kilometres and even a thousand doctors won't make him better today," said Fritz.

"But what about the coronation?" I cried.

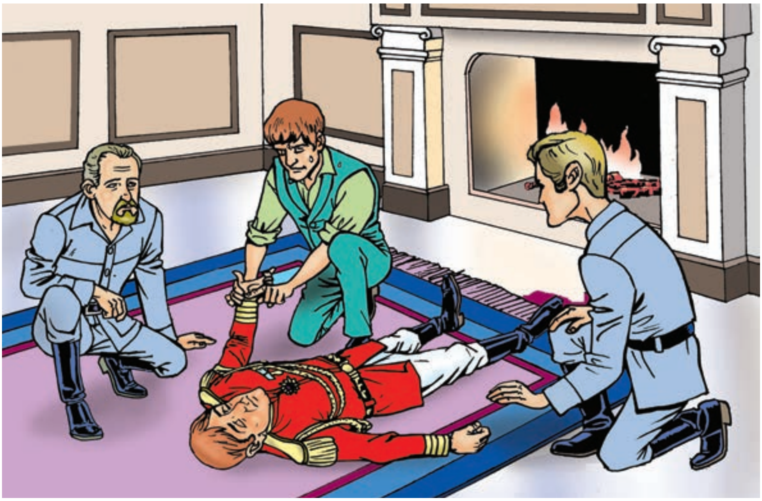
"We must tell the people of Ruritania that he's ill," said Fritz.

"If he's not crowned today, I don't think he'll ever be King," said Sapt.

"But why?" I asked.

"The whole country's waiting for him today. Most of the army is waiting too, with Duke Michael leading it. They won't be happy," said Sapt.

"We must tell everyone what's happened and make the best of it," said Fritz, getting up to leave.



Sapt stopped him. “Do you think that he was poisoned?” he asked me.

“Yes, I do,” I answered.

“Then who did it?”

“It must have been Duke Michael!” Fritz said angrily.

“Yes, he did this so that his brother cannot be crowned,” continued Sapt. “You don’t know what the Duke is like, do you, Rassendyll? If Rudolf doesn’t become King, Duke Michael will take the crown.”

We all sat in silence while we thought about what we could do. Then Sapt suddenly stood up. “I have an idea! It was lucky that we met you yesterday,” he said excitedly, looking at me, “because you can go to Strelsau to be crowned!”

“Me? That’s impossible!” I laughed. “People would realise that I’m not the King! And don’t forget that I’m English!”

“It would be easy to forget that,” said Fritz, “because your German’s perfect. And if we dress you in different clothes, no one will know.”

“If you don’t go to Strelsau, Duke Michael will be King tonight, and the King will either be dead or in prison,” said Sapt.

“I understand what you’re saying, but the King would never forgive me if I …”

“Our country needs this!” cried Sapt.

Standing up, I walked round the room in silence. The clock **ticked** sixty times, then seventy, eighty. I looked at the poor King lying on the floor and realised I had no choice. Sapt clearly read my expression, because he smiled even before I said quietly, “Very well, I’ll go.”

“We won’t wait for Michael’s guards but leave for Strelsau at once,” said Sapt. “We can hide the King in the cellar so when the guards arrive they’ll think no one’s here.”

“What if they search the building?” asked Fritz.

“Josef will say the hunting lodge is empty,” said Sapt. “This is our only chance.”

"How will we get the King to Strelsau?" I asked.

"Tonight we sleep in the palace," said Sapt. "As soon as we are alone in the King's bedroom, you and I will leave and come back here on our horses. Fritz can stay and guard the King's bedroom in the palace, and I will tell Josef to get the King ready for the journey back. The King will then return to the palace with me in the dark. Meanwhile, you will ride as fast as you can to the border and try to leave the country before it's light. Do we all agree on this plan?"

"I agree," I said.

"It's a good plan," said Fritz.

Sapt and Fritz picked up the King and began to carry him out of the room, but we realised we were being watched by Johann's mother, who looked at us with a strange expression before walking off.

"I think she heard us," said Sapt. "After we've moved the King, I'll speak to her." Meanwhile, Josef began to dress me in some of the King's clothes. When Fritz returned, he looked at me and said, "You know, I think we can do this."

"What happened to Johann's mother?" I asked.

"She's locked in the cellar with the King," said Fritz. "Josef will let her out later, after Michael's gone. But I'm sure, when they find that the King is not here, Michael will realise we know about his plan."

"Let's go," said Sapt, returning into the room.

"Is all safe here?" asked Fritz.

"No, nothing's safe anywhere, but we must do our best," answered Sapt.

We were now all in uniforms and set off on horses. It was a cool morning and Sapt immediately began to tell me the history of the King's life: of his family, likes, interests, weaknesses, friends and servants. He told me how I should behave in the palace and said he would always be at my side to tell me who the people were that I met.

Soon we reached the station. Fritz told the surprised-looking station

guard that the King had changed his plans, and we got on the train to the capital.

I looked at my watch — or I should say, the King's watch — and asked Fritz if he thought Duke Michael had found the King.

"I hope not," said Fritz.

After a short time we passed the towers and buildings of the capital and I could see we were near the station.

"How are you feeling?" asked Sapt.

"Nervous," I replied. "I'm not made of stone, you know."

"You'll be fine. But we are an hour earlier than they expect, so there'll be no one to meet us. We must send word to the palace. So meanwhile …"

"Meanwhile, I'll have some breakfast!" I cried. "The King is hungry!"

Sapt smiled at me, then took my hand. "Let's hope we're all alive tonight."

The train stopped and I breathed deeply as we stepped out onto the station at Strelsau. A moment later and everything was suddenly busy: men ran up to us, then ran away again, soldiers rode off on horses, other men showed me to the station restaurant. As I ate my breakfast, I could hear music and people **cheering** "God save the King!" in preparation for the coronation.

"God save both Kings," said Sapt.

When we left the restaurant, we saw that a group of soldiers had arrived to welcome us. It was led by a tall old man whose jacket was covered in medals.

"That is Marshal Strakencz," said Sapt, so that I knew who he was: a very important person in the army. The Marshal greeted me and said he was sorry that the Duke could not meet me at the station but that he would see me shortly. I answered as politely and formally as I could, and began to feel less nervous when no one seemed to realise that I was not the real King. But I saw that Fritz was still very nervous when he shook the Marshal's hand.

The soldiers led us out of the station, where we got onto horses that were waiting outside. I began to ride through the capital with the Marshal on my right and Sapt on my left. As we were riding, I saw that the city was partly old and partly new. There were wide, modern streets where the rich people lived in big houses. These were the people who had always lived well under the King's father, and who would support the new King because they knew that nothing would change. But behind the modern streets was a very different area that made up the old town. Here thousands of people were crowded into tiny houses which were old and hot in the summer, freezing cold in the winter. These narrow streets were where the city's many poor people lived, and these people did not want things to stay the same. For that reason, they did not like the King and supported Duke Michael, who told them he wanted things to be different and gave them hope for a better future. I knew that this area would not be very safe for me, the King.

We continued towards a great square where the palace stood. There were coloured flags and colourful ribbons everywhere and people lined the streets, clapping and cheering. I waved to them as we passed and people threw flowers down from the balconies above me. One flower fell on my horse, so I picked it up and stuck it onto my coat. Seeing me do this, the Marshal looked at me, but I could not tell from his expression whether he was happy or angry.

Nevertheless, I smiled happily at the Marshal. I have written "happily" but that is really how I felt. The truth is, at that moment, I really believed that I was actually the King. I looked up and laughed, **delighted** to see so much colour and so many happy faces. Then I looked again in surprise: there, on a balcony above me, was the proud smile of the traveller on the train, Antoinette de Mauban. As she stared at me, her expression changed. Surely she knew who I was. Surely she would call out, "That is not the real King!"

Chapter 3

Dressed as the King of Ruritania, I rode on through the streets of Strelsau towards the palace, expecting to hear Antoinette de Mauban tell everyone that I was not really the King. Yet I heard no one calling out, and I did not look back. Perhaps she had not recognised me after all.

I heard Marshal Strakencz give an order to his men and we suddenly entered a poor part of the town where the people were **loyal** to Duke Michael.

"Why have we changed our route?" I asked the Marshal.

"It's better this way," he explained.

Surely this way, however, was into a part of town where the people supported Duke Michael? How could this be a better way for the King? I stopped my horse and thought carefully. Perhaps this was the Marshal's plan to test me.

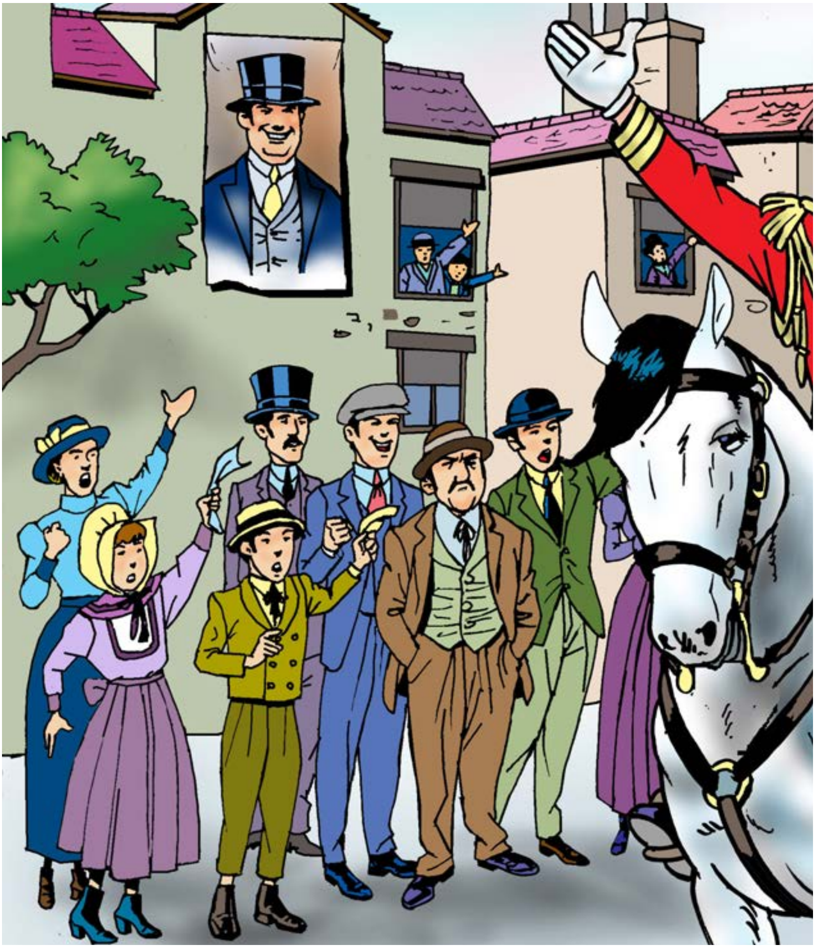
"Tell your soldiers to ride ahead of me," I told the Marshal. "I don't need them or you. You can wait here until I've continued through the old town alone. I want the people who live here to see that their King **trusts** them."

Sapt looked worried and shook his head. I could see that he thought that this was a very bad idea. **Nevertheless**, if I was to be a king, I decided I wanted to act like a king. All of my people should like me, not just a few.

"Don't you understand me? Tell your soldiers to go!" I shouted.

The Marshal looked surprised but gave the orders for his soldiers to go ahead, and Sapt's face looked even more **anxious**. I realised that if I were killed in this part of town, Sapt's position would become very difficult.

When all the soldiers were out of sight, I rode on my own through the streets of the old town. Now that I was alone on my horse, I realised how white, how clean my uniform seemed compared to the old buildings around me. The narrow streets were lined with hundreds of people and I could feel their eyes on me. First people talked quietly, but then I started



to hear cheering. I was so close to the people in this poor area that I could easily hear what the people were saying about me.

"I'm surprised that he's on his own, but he's taller than I thought," said one.

"His skin's very white," said another.

Although some people smiled and cheered, others were quiet and



looked at me angrily. I saw many paintings of the Duke in their windows and I knew what they thought of me.

Despite their anger, I reached the outside of the palace safely and I got off my horse. Briefly I saw Sapt, whose expression was one of relief that I was still alive.

It was now almost time for the coronation and a group of soldiers led me inside a beautiful building. There were so many people that I did not

know who was doing what. But I remember a beautiful young woman with red hair, who I knew was Princess Flavia, and a man with red cheeks, dark eyes and dark hair who I knew must be Michael. When he saw me, his face became white: until that moment, I do not think he realised that the King had come to Strelsau.

What can I remember of that coronation that was so important to the future of Ruritania? Very little, except the golden crown being placed on my head and a few other details. I remember the promises I was asked to read out and the beautiful music that played when someone announced that Rudolf the Fifth was now King of Ruritania. Most of all, I remember being greeted by Duke Michael, whose hands shook with anger when he took my hand in his, and who would not look at my eyes as he coldly said, "Congratulations."

However, no one else, not even the Princess, seemed to realise that I was not the real King. So there I stood in the palace for an hour, as if I had always been a king, greeting the many ambassadors and important people who came to see me. I became worried when a man I knew from England, Lord Topham, also came to greet me, but his eyes were so poor that he probably would not have noticed me anyway.

It was now time for me to go in a coach around the streets with the Princess. "When's the wedding?" I heard someone call, and I wished I had asked Sapt the answer to that very question.

At that moment, the Princess looked at me and said, "Do you know, Rudolf, you look different today? You look more tired and serious, and I think you're thinner. I can't believe that you really have changed today."

"I think I want to change now that I'm King," I replied.

"Perhaps you already have. I heard that you rode through the old town alone," she continued. "That surprised me. The people there must really have appreciated what you did."

I smiled. "I hope I'll make a good King," I said.

The coach had now arrived back at the palace and, once inside the building, I took my seat at my own table, next to Duke Michael, with Sapt

behind me and Fritz nearby. I felt like a king, but I also thought, where is the real King and what is he doing now?

Later that afternoon, I sat down on my bed feeling exhausted. Sapt and Fritz were still by my side, now looking very happy that our plan had been a success.

"That was a day to remember!" said Fritz. "I think I'd like to be King for a day. But Rassendyll, you mustn't try too hard. I'm not sure it was a good idea to ride alone through the old town. Duke Michael won't like it if you become too popular with his people, you know."

"Well, in a few hours, I'll become Rudolf Rassendyll once more," I said, remembering that I would be King only until that night.

"Only if you stay alive as long as that," said Sapt. "Michael's had news from Zenda and he's almost certainly planning something. You must leave the country as soon as you can. But you need a permit to leave the city."

"Who can I get a permit from?" I asked.

"The King, of course," said Sapt, putting on a table a form for me to sign and a paper with the King's **signature** for me to copy.

"Look, I can pretend to be the King because I look like him," I said. "That doesn't mean I can write like him too!"

"Oh, it's not hard to copy," said Sapt, and he did it easily for me.

"Now, remember our plan. I'll go with you, Rassendyll," said Sapt. "Now, Fritz, you will tell everyone that the King's gone to bed and that he's not to be woken by anybody until nine o'clock tomorrow morning. Do you understand, Fritz? No one."

"I understand," said Fritz.

"Michael may try to visit," continued Sapt, "but you mustn't let him in, even if your life depends on it."

"I don't need to be told that," said Fritz, proudly.

"Here, put on this big coat and hat," Sapt said to me. "Now, are you ready to go?"

"I'm ready," I said. I shook Fritz's hand and set off — not through the door but through a **panel** in the wall which led to a dark **passage.**

"In the old King's time, I knew all about this secret passage," Sapt explained.

I followed Sapt down the long, dark passage which ended in a heavy wooden door. Sapt unlocked it and we went out into a quiet street which ran along the back of the palace gardens. A man was waiting for us with two horses. Without saying anything, we climbed onto the horses and rode away.

At that time of the day, the town was busy and full of noise, but we took the quiet back streets. My coat and hat covered my face and hair, and I tried to stay low on the horse so no one would recognise me.

"Take your gun," said Sapt. "You may need it to get through the city gates. They'll all be closed at this time of day."

It was half past six and still light when we reached one of the tall wooden gates through the city walls. Sapt knocked on the gate, and we were very relieved when a few seconds later, a girl of about fourteen appeared.

"My father's not here, I'm afraid. He's gone to see the King," she said.

"Your father should have stayed here," said Sapt.

"But he told me not to open the gate for anyone," said the girl.

"Then you must give me the key to open it," said Sapt. "Here's a form from the King himself. You can show it to your father when he returns." Sapt then gave the girl the signed form and a coin and took the key from her hand. We quickly opened the gate, led our horses out, and closed it again behind us.

"Now we must move quickly," Sapt told me as we got back on the horses.

Once we were outside the city, there was little danger, as nearly everyone was in the streets celebrating the coronation. It became a clear night, with a shining moon, and soon we began to talk.

"What do you think the Duke knows about our plan?" I said.

"I don't know," said Sapt.

A little later, we stopped at an inn so that our horses could have a drink, and this lost us half an hour. We then continued and had gone around forty kilometres from the city when Sapt suddenly stopped. It was nearly half past nine.

"Listen," he cried. "I can hear something."

Far behind us we could just hear the noise of horses coming towards us. I looked at Sapt and saw worry on his face.

"We're lucky that the wind's blowing towards us so we can hear them. Come on!" he called, and we set off fast. After some time, we stopped again and could not hear the other horses, so we slowed down and thought we could relax. However, a little farther we stopped once more and this time we heard them.

Sapt got off his horse and put his ear to the ground. "I think there're two horses," he said. "They're about two kilometres behind."

We went on quickly and eventually we reached the tall, dark trees of the forest of Zenda and stopped at a **fork** in the road. One road went deep into the forest, the other went outside the forest towards the town. "To the right's our road, to the left's the castle. Now, get off your horse."

"Get off? But they'll catch us!" I said.

"Get off your horse!" he repeated angrily, and I did what he asked. We took the horses into the dark trees and waited quietly where we could see the road, but they (whoever they were) could not see us. I saw that Sapt had a gun in his hand.

"Do you want to see who they are?" I **whispered.**

"Yes, and where they're going," Sapt answered.

Soon we could hear the horses getting nearer and nearer. The moon was full now so we could see the road clearly. "Here they come!" Sapt whispered. "Look, it's the Duke!"

On the road through the forest, I could see the Duke and a strong-

looking man who Sapt later told me was Max Holf, brother to Johann who I had seen at the inn. When they reached the fork in the road, they stopped.

“Which way?” asked Duke Michael.

“I think we should go to the castle where we can learn the truth,” said Max.

“Why not the hunting lodge?” said Michael.

“If all’s well, why go there? And if all isn’t well, I fear there’ll be a **trap**.”



The Duke did not move and seemed to be listening.

“I thought I heard something,” he said quietly.

I saw Sapt lift up his gun, but the Duke then said, “To Zenda, then,” and they set off once more.

I could see that Sapt still held up his gun and was pointing it at the Duke, but although I knew he would have loved to shoot, he realised it would not have helped the King at this moment. He put his gun away once more.

We waited silently for ten minutes before we came out from the trees.

“So, he’s had news that all is well,” said Sapt.

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"I wish I knew," said Sapt. "It's a real puzzle."

We rode on through the forest as fast as our tired horses would allow. We said nothing, and I thought about what the man had said. What did "all is well" mean? Was all well with the King?

It did not take us long to reach the hunting lodge where we had left the King and quickly jump off our horses. The lodge was dark and quiet and no one came out to meet us. All of a sudden, Sapt took hold of my arm.

"Look there!" he said, pointing at five or six **torn** and dirty handkerchiefs on the ground. "That's what I used to tie up the old woman. Fasten the horses and let's see what's happened."

The front door to the lodge was not locked and we went into the room where I had eaten the night before. Plates and cups were still on the table. "Come on," said Sapt, and we ran down the passage towards the cellar where we had left the King. But the door to the cellar was open.

"So they found the old woman," I said.

"I realised that when I saw the handkerchiefs," said Sapt.

"Where's Josef and the King?" I asked.

We found another door inside the cellar that was locked, and it took a lot of work to get it open. It was dark inside and completely silent and I could see Sapt was looking very worried. He loved the King and would have hated anything bad to have happened to him. So I told him to stay where he was and went inside the room with a **candle**.

There were a lot of things on the floor of the dark room, as if there had been a fight. I held up the candle and saw spiders on the walls, then, far in one corner, I saw a body.

I slowly went back outside the room to tell Sapt what I had seen.

"It's not good news. I'm afraid he's dead," I said.

"The King?" he cried, putting his hand over his mouth.

"No, the body's Josef. The King's not there."

I closed the heavy door behind me and we walked with heavy hearts back from the cellar to the dining room.

"So, they've got the King!" said Sapt, sitting down heavily with his hands over his face.

"That's why they said that all's well. But when did they find out?" I asked.

"Michael must've known all day," said Sapt.

"What did he think when he met me, then? He knew I was not the real King!"

"It doesn't matter what he thought then," said Sapt. "What matters is what he thinks now!"

"We must get back and collect every soldier in Strelsau. Michael will have to be caught before the King is killed."

"Wait," said Sapt. "We need to think. It must've been the old woman who told them what had happened somehow. I understand now. They came here to kidnap the King and they found him in that room in the cellar. If we hadn't escaped to Strelsau, we would've been killed."

"So where's the King now?" I asked.

"I have no idea," he said. "But you could see at the coronation that Duke Michael's really worried. Let's think about how we can worry him a bit more."

A clock in the house struck one as Sapt stood up with a smile, and I could see that he had another plan.

"We'll go back to Strelsau," he said excitedly. "The King will be back in the capital again tomorrow!"

"How is that possible if we don't know where he is?"

"We'll go back to Strelsau and continue with the game we started. You've done a good job until now, so why not continue?"

"Do you mean you want me to be the King again?" I asked.

"Yes, I do!" he cried.

Chapter 4

It had not been easy to escape from Strelsau and return to the hunting lodge without anyone seeing us, so when Sapt suggested that I return to the capital and continue pretending to be the King, I let him know exactly what I thought.

"You're mad!" I said to Sapt. "The plan's too dangerous!"

Walking up to me, Sapt put his hand on my shoulder and then looked deep into my eyes.

"Listen, if you're a man, you can save the King. Go back and pretend to be him."

"But the Duke knows where the real King is, and all his men know!" I protested.

"Yes, but they can't say anything," said Sapt. "Listen! We've got them! They can't say anything without showing their **guilt**. They cannot say, 'This isn't the real King because we've kidnapped him and killed his servant.' Will they say that?"

I realised that Sapt was right. Even if Michael knew who I was, he could not say he knew, but I still had **doubts.**

"Sapt, surely someone in Strelsau will realise I'm not the real King," I said. "The Princess has already said she thinks the King's changed. She'll certainly realise."

"Of course it's a **risk,** but we must have a King in Strelsau, or the city will belong to Michael within twenty-four hours. You must do it, for Ruritania!"

"What if the King's already dead?"

"If the real King's already dead, then you shall stay King! But I think the King's still alive, and I don't think they'll do anything to him if you're in the capital. They'd know that you would stay King if they killed him!"

It was a mad plan, even madder than the first plan, which had been a

success, but as I listened to Sapt, I saw that it could work.

"I still worry that someone will realise," I said again.

"Anything is possible, but come, Rassendyll! Let's go to Strelsau. We'll be caught if we stay here."

"All right, Sapt, I'll try," I said.

"Good man!" said Sapt. "I'll go and get the horses."

But seconds later, he came back. "Look out of the window."

Through the window I could see in the moonlight a big group of men coming down the road from Zenda: four were on horses, another four or five were walking. I knew they must be Michael's men, and they seemed to be carrying **spades**, coming to the house to hide their evil work.



I remembered poor Josef's body and said, "Sapt, we should make sure that some of those evil men join Josef."

"Very well," said Sapt. "As a soldier, I've had a lot of fights like this. I'll show you what to do."

We went out of a back door and climbed onto our horses with our swords ready. We could hear the men arrive at the front of the hunting lodge, and one called out, "Go and get the body."

"Now!" cried Sapt, and we drove our horses fast to the front of the building. The men looked shocked to see us and were not prepared. I easily knocked one man off his horse, then hit another big man with my sword as he moved towards me. But there were only two of us and within seconds I realised there were people all around me. Just as I was about to be trapped, I saw a **gap** between the men and saw my chance to escape. I turned my horse and quickly rode through the gap towards the forest. My horse was fast but as I left, I heard a gun and I was almost shot. I could see Sapt on



his horse ahead of me, and went as quickly as I could towards him, waving. Then I heard another shot and felt a terrible pain in my finger. Someone shot again, but now we were too far away for them to hit us. At last I caught

up with Sapt, who was breathless but laughing.

"Well done!" he said. "That was very brave. Do you think they saw who you were?"

"Yes, one of the men said 'It's the King' before I pushed him off his horse."

"Good!" said Sapt. "That will give Michael something to worry about."

After a time, we stopped so that Sapt could put a bandage on my finger, which now hurt badly. We moved on in silence, as quickly as our poor horses were able to, until we arrived at a farm just as the sun was rising on a cold, clear day. I covered my face, saying to the farmer that I had a bad tooth before we asked for food.

The farmer was kind and let us rest, but we knew we could not wait for long and soon headed off. Some hours later, we saw the buildings of Strelsau ahead of us. It was about nine o'clock and at this time of day, the city gates were open, so we went back through the gate that we had left from. The streets of the city were very quiet, as most of the people were resting after the celebrations, and we saw almost no one until we were back at the palace. Here, one of Sapt's servants was waiting for us.

"Is all well, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, Freyler, all is well," answered Sapt.

"But the King's hurt?" he said, seeing my finger.

"It's nothing," I said.

"He caught his finger in a door," Sapt explained. "Now remember, say nothing about this. All young men like to ride their horses now and then, so why not the King?"

As the servant led our horses away, Sapt said quietly to me, "Freyler's a good servant, but sometimes it's best not to trust even the best of men."

Sapt put the key in the secret door and we went back inside the palace, down the passage to the King's room. Back inside, Fritz, who had been asleep, jumped up when he heard us and cried, "My King, you're safe! I'm so pleased." He then bowed down in front of me.

"Even Fritz thinks you're the real King!" laughed Sapt. "I think we can do this."

"Oh! Rassendyll?" said Fritz in surprise. "But what's happened to your hand? Are you hurt?"

"It's nothing serious. What's more important is what we have to tell you."

"What is it? Where's the real King?" he cried.

"Be quiet, Fritz!" said Sapt. "Don't speak so loudly! People will hear us."

Suddenly there was a knock at the door, so Sapt took me by the arm.

"Quick! Go into the bedroom, take your hat and boots off and climb into bed. Cover yourself up so people think you're asleep."

I did as I was told, but a minute later Sapt came into the bedroom and smiled. He introduced me to a polite young gentleman who came up to my bed and told me that he was a servant of Princess Flavia, who had sent him to find out how the King was feeling after the coronation.

"Send her my thanks," I said, "and tell her that I've never felt better in my life."

"The King's had a good long sleep," said Sapt.

The servant bowed and left, and I smiled at Sapt. But Fritz still looked very serious.

"Tell me, is the King dead?" he asked quietly.

"We don't think so," I answered. "But Duke Michael's holding him prisoner."

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The next day, it took Sapt three hours to tell me all about the King's **duties**. It seems that a king's life is quite hard, but a pretend king's life is even harder. At least Sapt stayed with me to tell me what I ought to do and what I ought not to do, and what I should say to the many important people I had to meet during the day. I was worried when I met the French

Ambassador and he asked me a question which I could not answer, but later Sapt told me that I should not worry, as the real King would not have been able to answer either. I also had to tell everyone that I could not write because of my finger, so many important **documents** were not completed.

After many hours of meetings, I was finally alone with my friends once more. I asked a new servant, who had never met the real King, for a drink and then asked Sapt if I could rest at last. I was not used to such hard work.

"Rest? No! We mustn't waste any time! Shouldn't we plan how to attack Michael?" asked Fritz.

"Let's take things slowly," said Sapt.

"So aren't we going to do anything?" said Fritz.

"We aren't going to do anything dangerous," answered Sapt.

"If people find out who I am," I said, "then I'll fight with the Duke. But at the moment, let's wait to see what the Duke does."

"He'll kill the King," said Fritz.

"He won't," said Sapt. "If he kills the King, he knows that Rassendyll will stay as King instead. And he cannot accuse Rassendyll of anything because then people will know that he's kidnapped the King."

"And we cannot accuse him in public without admitting that I'm not the real King," I explained.

"So no one can do anything! It's a **stalemate**!" cried Fritz. "But wait. Half of Michael's Six Men are in Strelsau with the Duke."

"Only half? Then that means the other half are guarding the King," said Sapt.

"Yes, you're right," said Fritz. "So that means the King must be alive. If the King were dead, all the Six Men would be here with the Duke."

"Excuse me, but who are the Six Men?" I asked.

"Unfortunately I fear you'll soon be meeting them," said Fritz. "They're six special soldiers who Michael keeps in his house at all times. They're completely loyal to him. Three are from Ruritania, one is Belgian,

one French, and one's from your country."

"They'll do whatever Michael asks them to do," continued Sapt.

"Would they try to kill me?" I asked nervously.

"Without a doubt. Which three are here in Strelsau, Fritz?" asked Sapt.

"The three foreigners: De Gautet, Bersonin and Detchard."

"So they were not the men we saw at the hunting lodge?" I asked.

"I wish they were," said Sapt, "because then there'd only be four and not six of them."

I now decided that I should act — perhaps like all real kings do — by keeping some secrets even from the people I could trust the most. My plan was to make myself as popular as I could, and say nothing bad about Michael. In this way, I could hope to stop the poorer people of Strelsau from thinking badly about me. Then, if there were a fight, perhaps people would not want to follow Michael, although of course I hoped there would not be such a fight. Perhaps I could actually enjoy my game in Strelsau and something good would come from it. Michael would not grow stronger while the game lasted.

My plan began the next day, when I rode my horse through the park with Fritz and waved to everyone who bowed to me. The more my people saw of me, the more they would realise I cared about them and their lives. I was not going to be a distant king who people only heard about. And as I had done before the coronation, I wanted to be seen most in the old town, where most of the poor people lived.

Riding through some of the narrowest and oldest town streets, I stopped to buy flowers from a poor young girl with a gold coin. This attracted a lot of interest, and soon hundreds of people were following me on my way to the home of Princess Flavia.

I knew the Princess was very popular and the people seemed very pleased that I had gone to see her. Moreover, if I had the support of the Princess, this could only help me. Fritz also thought this was a good idea and came with me on my visit to the Princess's palace.



I was shown into a guest room full of enormous mirrors, paintings and beautiful furniture, and soon the Princess arrived with her servants. I knew that I had to be very careful when I talked to the Princess. I needed the Princess to trust me, but I did not want to say too much to her, or she would realise I was not the real King. And although I wanted to show her that I trusted her, she must not think she could say what she liked to me, because I was not the man she thought I was.

"You have completely changed since you became King, sir," she said.

"You need not call me 'sir'," I told her. "For after all, we are still cousins."

She looked at me, then said, "I'm proud to do so, Rudolf. But I think your face has changed."

I needed to talk about something else, so I said, "My brother's back in the city, I hear. He went away for a while, didn't he?"

"Yes, I hear he's back in Strelsau."

"That's good. The nearer he is to me, the better."

The Princess looked at me. “Do you want him to be near you so that you know what he’s doing?”

“I’d like him to be near me because he’s my half-brother. We’re family!” I answered. “We need to help and support each other. Unfortunately, I’ve heard he can’t stay in Strelsau for very long.”

She looked at me strangely when I said this, but at that moment there was a loud cheer from the streets outside. The Princess ran to the window, then she turned to me, looking anxious.

“It’s him!” she said. “It’s the Duke of Strelsau! He’s coming here now.”

I was surprised by this news and did not know what to say. For several minutes, Princess Flavia and I sat in silence. Her servants also stood silently, with their heads bowed. We could hear steps outside the door and I expected Michael to enter, but then the steps stopped, so we continued to talk again. I cannot remember what we talked about, but I found it very easy to talk to the Princess and time passed._

I thought it was strange that Michael had not come into the room, but we did not talk about him at all until the Princess suddenly jumped up and said, “You do know that Michael will be very angry. Is that a good idea?”

“What do you mean? How am I making him angry?” I asked.

“You haven’t asked him to come in. He’s been waiting outside the room for a long time.”

“But of course he can come in,” I said, realising I had made a serious mistake.

“How funny you are,” she said. “You know that no one can enter without your permission.”

“Of course,” I said. “I’d forgotten!” But the Princess looked at me in a way that made me think she realised something was wrong.

“I was never very good at remembering all the rules,” I continued, wishing that Fritz had told me about this, “but I’ll go and get him myself at once.”

I opened the door and went out of the guest room to greet Michael. He was sitting at a table looking very angry. All his men were standing next to him. I held out my hand and Michael stood up slowly and took it, then I showed him into the Princess's guest room.

"Brother," I said, "I'm so sorry. I didn't know you were waiting, otherwise I'd have asked you in sooner."

He thanked me, but coldly. Michael did not seem to be good at hiding his feelings, and I could see that he was angry with me. I could also see he was trying to pretend that he thought I was the real King.

We sat down with the Princess.

"You've hurt your hand," he said.

"Yes, an animal bit me," I explained. "It'll be fine."

"Is there any danger from the bite?" Flavia asked.

"Not from this," I said looking at Michael, "but if I gave him the chance to bite again, it would be different."

"Did you kill the animal?" Flavia asked.

"No," I said. "We're waiting to see if his bite's poisonous."

"And if it is?" said Michael, smiling coldly, clearly understanding who I was really talking about.

"He'll be knocked on the head," I said.

"But he might bite again," said Michael.

"I'm sure he'll try," I replied, smiling. Then, worried that Michael would say something I did not want to hear, I decided to change the subject. I told him how fine his soldiers were and thanked him for the **splendid** coronation. I thanked him for the great time I had had at the hunting lodge in the forest. When he heard this, he jumped to his feet and angrily walked towards the door. Then he stopped and said, "Three of my friends would very much like to meet you, sir. They're waiting outside."

So I walked up to Michael and took his arm and we entered the outside room like best friends. Michael asked the three men to come forward.

"These gentlemen are the most loyal and honest of the King's servants, and are my great friends."

"I'm very pleased to meet them," I said.

They bowed before me one at a time: first De Gautet, a tall, thin Frenchman with straight hair; then Bersonin, the Belgian, who was large and about thirty years old; and finally Detchard, the Englishman, who had a thin face, strong shoulders and very short hair. He looked like a good fighter and a bad character. I spoke to him in English with a pretend foreign **accent**, and I am sure I saw him smile when I spoke.

So, Detchard knows my secret, I thought. And if he knew, surely all the Six Men knew as well. How dangerous were these special soldiers? And how safe was I, even in the palace of Strelsau?

Chapter 5

I was not sorry to say goodbye to my brother and his soldier friends, although I was sad to say goodbye to the Princess. Should I tell her the truth? Was I wrong to pretend to be the King? I did not know.

"Rudolf, be careful, won't you?" the Princess said.

"Be careful of what?" I asked.

"I can't say. But think what your life means to the people of Ruritania," she said.

I remembered what Rose had said about my brother Robert back in England: "He realises his position in society brings with it responsibilities." I had always wanted to have a quiet life, but I suddenly realised how many responsibilities I now had here in Ruritania. How on earth had I got myself into such a situation?

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Over the next few weeks, I am pleased to say, no one seemed to notice I was not the real King of Ruritania. Because I looked so like the King, it was much easier for me to pretend to be him than to pretend to be my neighbour at home, for example. I learnt a lot about how a country is run, but I made mistakes, sometimes big ones. I became very good at pretending I had forgotten rules or people that I had met, and I hoped my growing popularity with the people of Ruritania would help them to forgive my occasional bad decisions.

One day, Sapt came into my room. "Here's a letter for you," he said. "From the writing, I think it's from a woman. I also have some important news."

"What is it?" I asked.

"We now know that the King's at the Castle of Zenda," he said.

"How do you know this?"

"We asked where the rest of the Six Men were, and found out that they

are all there at the castle: Lauengram, Krafstein and young Rupert Hentzau, the three biggest criminals in Ruritania."

"Do you think the King's definitely there?" I asked.

"Almost certainly. The three men are always at the castle, and people say the drawbridge is nearly always kept up. That is not normal. No one goes into the building without the permission of Rupert or Michael."

"Then I must go to Zenda," I said.

"That wouldn't be a good idea."

"If not today, then soon. I must go there."

"You'll probably stay there forever if you do," said Sapt.

I was silent and I could see that Sapt was studying my face.

"What's worrying you, Rassendyll?" he asked.

"Tell me, Sapt, why is it that wherever I go in the capital, I'm followed by six people?"

"Because I've ordered them to follow you."

"But why?"

"It would be very useful for Michael if you disappeared. And if you disappear, the game's over."

"I don't need such help," I protested. "I can look after myself."

"De Gautet, Bersonin and Detchard are in Strelsau, and any one of them could catch you easily," he said, as if I were a child. "So, what's that letter?" said Sapt, pointing at the one he had given me.

I opened it and read it aloud:

If the King wants to know something important, please do what I ask. At the end of New Avenue, there is a house in a large garden. There is a wall around the garden with a gate at the back. At midnight tonight, go through the gate where you will see a statue of a horse, turn right and walk twenty metres. There you will find six steps up to a summer house. Go into this summer house and someone will tell you something very important about your life. But you must be alone. If you do not come, your

life will be in danger. I am a loyal friend to you. Do not show this letter to anyone, or it will put a woman in great danger: Michael will punish me.

"Yes, and Michael can also write a very good letter," said Sapt.

I thought the same: surely Michael had written this letter to trap me. I was about to throw the letter in the bin, when I saw that there was more writing on the other side.

If you do not believe me, ask Colonel Sapt.

"What?" said the Colonel, so I read on.

Ask him what woman has been a guest of the Duke. Ask if her name begins with A.

"It must be Antoinette de Mauban," I cried.

"How do you know?" asked Sapt, and I told him all I knew about the woman.

"I've heard that she came to Ruritania with her servants as a guest of Michael," Sapt said. "People say she had a great argument with Michael, and now she's staying somewhere in Strelsau."

"So she could be useful to us," I suggested.

"Perhaps she would be useful if she had information about Michael. However, I believe that Michael wrote that letter," said Sapt.

"So do I, but I'm not certain," I said. "I'll go to the house tonight."

"No, you mustn't," said Sapt. "Let me go instead."

"You can come too, but you must wait outside the gate when I go in alone."

"I don't believe this woman and you're mad to go!" said Sapt.

"I believe this woman, and I will go," I said. "Either I go to the house, or I go back to England. We don't have much time. Every day we leave the King **imprisoned** there's more danger. We must move quickly."

Sapt was beginning to know when he could tell me what to do and when he could not. So **reluctantly** he agreed with me.

***

At half past eleven that night, we got on our horses and soon arrived outside the gate to the house, carrying our guns. It was a very dark night.

"I'll wait for you here, outside the gate," said Sapt. "Good luck."

I opened the gate and I found myself in a leafy garden. I saw the statue of the horse and walked across the garden with the gun in my hand. I followed the directions given in the letter and, although it was dark, I soon arrived at the summer house. When I went inside, I heard a woman's voice.

"Shut the door," the woman whispered. I did as she asked and then looked around the room, which was lit by a small candle. It was almost empty except for a small **iron** table and two chairs. In the soft light, I could just see Antoinette in front of me and her servant behind.

"We have little time," Antoinette said. "Listen! I know who you are and I know you're not the King. You're Mr Rassendyll. I wrote that letter to you at the Duke's orders. In twenty minutes, three men will be here to kill you."

"Or I'll kill them! I suppose they're three of the Duke's Six Men?"

"Yes, you must leave here before they arrive, so listen carefully! The plan is to kill you and to take your body into the old town. It'll be found and Michael will arrest Colonel Sapt and Captain Fritz von Tarlenheim for murdering you. Then a messenger will be sent to Zenda and the real King will be murdered too. The Duke will then become King. Do you understand?"

"Oh, yes, I understand. It's a clever plan. But why are you helping me?"

"I don't like to see people being killed. Now go. But remember, you're never safe in this city. You have guards following you, don't you? Well, Michael's men are following them. If you're alone, then you'll die. Now go quietly this way past the summer house for about a hundred metres. There you'll find a ladder against the wall. Climb it and run as fast as you can."

"And what will you do?"

"I also have a game to play. I'll tell the Duke's men that you never

came. If the Duke doesn't find out what I've done, we may meet again."

"Thank you. You've helped the King tonight," I said. "But before I go, tell me something: Do you know where he is in the castle?"

"Yes, I do know. Inside the castle there's a door on the right, and behind that — but listen! They're here! It's too late for you to escape!"

I looked through a gap in the summer house door and saw three men standing outside. Then I heard a voice, which spoke in English:

"Are you in there, Mr Rassendyll?"

I did not answer.

"We want to make you an offer," the voice said. "Will you let us in?"

"Do not trust them," said Antoinette quietly.

"Stand outside and talk," I called. "I won't let you in."

"That's a good idea," said the voice, who I thought must be Detchard.

"Is that Mr Detchard?" I asked.

"Our names are not important. We can offer you a safe journey to the border and fifty thousand English pounds," he continued.

"That sounds a generous offer," I said, but of course I did not trust them at all. "Give me a minute to think." Then I told Antoinette and her servant to stand close to the wall, away from the door.

"What are you going to do?" Antoinette asked.

"You'll see."

I picked up the iron table and held it by the legs so it was in front of me. Then I said, "Gentlemen, I'd like to accept your kind offer. Perhaps you can open the door for me."

"Why don't you open the door yourself?" said Detchard.

"Very well, but it opens outwards," I explained. "You'll need to step back or the door will hit you."

I pretended to try and open the door, and called out, "I can't open it."

"Then I'll open it," called Detchard.



As Detchard was walking up to the door, I moved quietly to the back of the summer house. It took him a few seconds to open the door, but as soon as he did, I ran at him as fast as I could holding the table in front of me.

There was a terrible noise as all three men fired their guns at once, but I was protected by the table top. The men were all standing on the steps up to the summer house, so as I ran out, the table top hit them and they all fell down the steps. Before I knew what was happening, I too was falling down the steps, but as I was on top of the men, I managed to get up fastest and run away, firing my gun behind me.

There were angry shouts and more shots. I remembered what Antoinette had said about a ladder and soon found it and climbed over the wall in seconds. Running along the outside of the wall, I heard more shots but realised they were being fired by Sapt, who was trying to get into the gate.

"Sapt! It's me, let's go!" I shouted.

"You're safe!" he cried in surprise.

"I have a fine story to tell you about a table!" I told him, as we jumped

on our horses and rode quickly back to the palace.

***

The next day, Sapt read me the latest report from the Chief of Police.

"Some interesting things have been happening this morning," said Sapt. "The police report says that the Duke of Strelsau left the capital by the road to Zenda. An hour later, he was followed by De Gautet, Bersonin and Detchard, who had a bandage around his arm."

I was pleased that my shot the night before had been a good one.

"Finally, listen to this: the people of the capital are not happy that the King has yet to marry the Princess. Some people say that if they do not marry soon, it would be better if the Princess married the Duke of Strelsau. However, the King is having a ball tonight for the Princess."

"I don't know anything about a ball," I said.

"Oh, it has all been prepared," said Fritz, "by me."

"Listen," said Sapt. "You must ask the Princess to marry you tonight."

"I can't do that," I said. "It wouldn't be fair to the Princess."

***

That evening, the ball was a great success. After we had eaten, I sat with the Princess and some of my other guests in a small room by the palace gardens. The servants brought us coffee and we had time to talk.

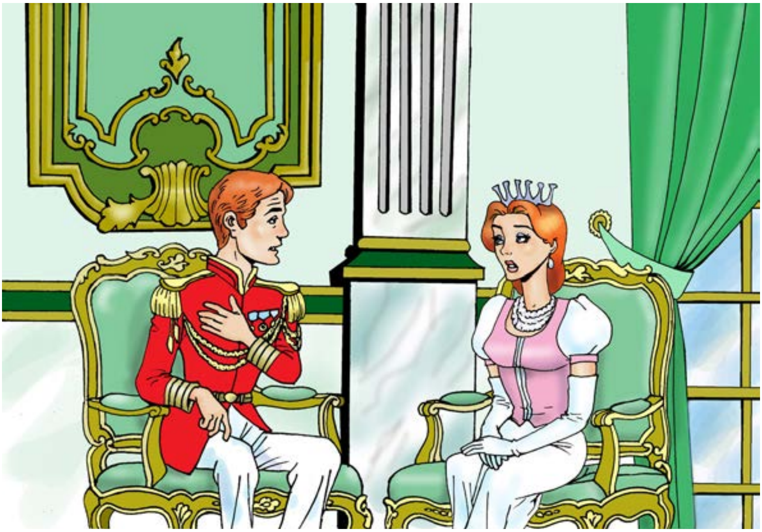
"You've been King for a few weeks now," said the Princess. "Everyone says you've done a very good job. I'm very pleased for you."

"You know, someone once said to me, 'a person who has a position in society has responsibilities.' Recently I've realised how true this is."

"Haven't you always thought that?" asked the Princess.

"No, when I was younger, I didn't think I needed to worry about society. I thought that was someone else's job."

The Princess looked very surprised. "But you always knew that you would become King. How could you think that was someone else's job?"



Once again, I had made a mistake in what I said. But suddenly, instead of saying something to cover up my mistake, I wanted to tell the Princess the truth. She was kind and clever and she was going to marry the King. She should know what had happened to her future husband, and she should know all about my game. I decided I had to tell her everything.

"Flavia," I said quietly so none of the other guests could hear, "there's something you should know. I'm not really…"

But I never finished the words I wanted to say because at that moment, we heard footsteps in the garden outside the room. I looked up and jumped with fright, because a face suddenly appeared at the **French window**.

I relaxed when I saw that the person looking in on us was Sapt. "I apologise, but there's someone who wants to see you, sir," he said to me, but I could tell from his eyes that he was angry. How long had he been listening to my conversation with the Princess? Had he heard that I was about to tell her the truth about who I really was?

We returned to the ball where the Princess went quickly away with her servants and I was welcomed by other important people at the ball. I realised then that my game had gone too far to go back: I could not tell

anyone who I really was or they would think I was mad. Sapt had stopped me from saying too much to the Princess, and Sapt's plan really was working.

***

The next morning, Sapt and I sat in my room thinking about what to do next.

"Do you realise," I said, "that everyone really thinks I'm the King, even the Princess? I could even arrange for the Duke and the real King to be killed."

"This is all true," said Sapt. "So will you do such a thing?"

"Of course not. I shouldn't be here, pretending to be anything. It isn't fair for the people of Ruritania and it isn't fair for the Princess, either. We can't wait any longer," I said. "We must go to Zenda and rescue the King."

"You're a good man," said Sapt.

First, however, I needed to see Princess Flavia again. If I could not tell her the truth, I could at least warn her that the situation in Ruritania was not as good as she believed it to be. I visited her in her palace later that day, and she asked her servants to bring me some coffee. Then she told me that she had received two letters. One was from Michael, who had invited her to visit Zenda. Then she showed me the other letter.

"I don't know who this one's from," she said.

I immediately knew who it was from: the writing was the same as the letter I had received. It was from Antoinette de Mauban and it read:

You do not know me, but I do not want you to fall into the power of the Duke. Do not accept any invitation from him and do not go anywhere without many guards. Show this letter, if you can, to the leader of Ruritania.

"Why does it say 'the leader' and not 'the King'?" she asked.

"You must do as the letter says," I said, not answering her question. "I'll order guards to watch you."

"Do you know who sent this?" she asked.

"A friend of mine. Today you must say you're ill so you can't go to Zenda."

"So you don't mind making Michael angry?" she asked.

"I don't mind anything if you're safe," I said.

I had an idea about who would be the best guard for Princess Flavia, and I immediately visited Marshal Strakencz, who I knew I could trust. I asked him to guard the Princess and not to allow any of the Duke's men to visit her. I told him I was worried about the Duke's ambitions, and he did not look surprised.

"I'm leaving Strelsau for a few days," I told him. "Every evening, I'll send you a message. If you don't get a message for three days, you have the **authority** to say that you are now the head of Strelsau. You must then ask the Duke to allow you to see the King. If he doesn't allow you to see the King in twenty-four hours, you must say that the King's dead. Then you must tell the people of Ruritania who their new ruler will be. You do know who that will be?"

"Princess Flavia, of course," he answered.

Chapter 6

It was nearly time for us to make a move against Duke Michael. I was with Marshal Strakencz, who I had to trust to keep the future of Ruritania safe.

“You must promise that you’ll protect Princess Flavia from the Duke,” I told him. “As you know, his mother was not royal and he can only legally become King if he marries the Princess.”

“I promise,” Marshal Strakencz said, bowing.

“Now I’ll write down what I’ve just said. But my finger still hurts. ”

“Yes, sir,” he said, watching me write. “The writing’s a little different from your usual. I hope people know it’s a real order from the King.”

“I trust you,” I told him and he smiled.

“The Princess will be safe with me,” he said.

I returned to the palace and told Sapt and Fritz to get ready to go to Zenda. There was only one thing left for me to do before we went. I went to tell Flavia that I was leaving Strelsau to go hunting.

“So you’d prefer to hunt animals than do your duties in the capital?” she asked quietly.

“The thing I hunt is a very big animal,” I explained. “Because I’ll be hunting Michael.”

The Princess looked very worried.

“This’ll be dangerous!” she said.

“If I don’t come back, you must become Queen for me.”

She then stood tall and said, “I don’t really know what’s going on, but I’ll do whatever is right for Ruritania. If that means becoming the Queen, then so be it.”

“Thank you,” I said. “Let us hope that it’s not necessary.”

I knew, however, that this was more than possible.

***

About eight kilometres from Zenda, on the opposite side of the town to where the castle stands, there is a leafy wood on a low hill. On top of the hill is a large, modern country house called Tarlenheim which belongs to a relative of Fritz. He does not often visit the house, so when Fritz asked if we could use it for a hunting trip, he happily agreed.



So the next day, Sapt, Fritz and I set off from the capital and arrived at the country house at about midday, with a large party of servants and ten brave and strong gentlemen that I trusted. We had told these men that Michael had tried to kill me and that a good friend of the King's was held prisoner in the castle. They knew it was our job to set him free, and being brave and loyal, they did not need to ask any more questions.

However, it did not take long for Duke Michael to hear about our arrival, and after only an hour, we were visited by three of his famous Six Men: the Ruritanians Lauengram, Krafstein and Rupert Hentzau. I am sure they knew that we were not really there to hunt animals but had a much bigger plan.

The youngest and strongest of the three, Rupert Hentzau, told us how sorry the Duke was that we could not stay in his mansion, but unfortunately the Duke and many of his servants had a dangerous illness, so it was best if we stayed away. His speech was formal and polite, but I did not believe a word he said.

"I'm sorry to hear this," I said to them. "I hope my brother feels better soon. And what of your friends De Gautet, Bersonin and Detchard? I heard that Detchard was injured?"

Rupert smiled at me and said, "You needn't worry. Detchard will be fine."

"Good. Perhaps you would like to stay and eat with us?" I said.

"You're very kind," said Rupert, "but unfortunately we have important duties and need to get back to the castle."

"Of course you do," I laughed. "Thank you for coming. I look forward to seeing you all again."

When they had gone, Sapt said, "That Rupert's the worst criminal of them all!"

***

That evening, I set off for Zenda with Fritz. Our journey, we knew, could be a dangerous one, but my face was covered and we felt safe because there were many people on the roads. We did not go near the castle, however, but went to the inn where I had stayed on my first night in Ruritania.

"I've been here before," I told Fritz.

"Won't they recognise you, then?" he said.

"Of course. Just do as I say and everything will be fine."

I kept the coat over my face as we entered the inn and we asked to have a meal in a quiet room at the back. When the owner's daughter brought us our food, I uncovered my face so she could see me.

"You're the King!" she cried, almost dropping our plates. "I remember you when you stayed with us. I told my mother you weren't really an

Englishman and that you were the King! I'm sorry if we said anything bad when you stayed with us."

"I'll forgive you if you promise to help us," I said. I explained that I wanted to see Johann.

"He never comes here anymore," she explained. "He works at the castle now."

"But you're still friends and you must ask to see him," I told her. "Tell him to meet you tomorrow night at ten o'clock, then bring him to our house. And tell no one that you've seen the King. Do you understand?"

"You won't hurt him, will you, sir?"

"Not if he does as we ask," I promised.

She agreed happily, and after our meal we returned to Tarlenheim late that night. As we got off our horses, Sapt ran out of the house and cried, "So you're safe!"

"We're fine. Why shouldn't we be?"

"It seems that it's dangerous to ride in this area unless you're in a large group. One of our men, Bernenstein, went out alone in the woods today. He saw three men in the trees and one shot him. He's upstairs in bed with a bullet in his arm. The next bullet could be for you."

We thought that we would be safe in the country house, but I was wrong. The next day, I was resting in the living room when Rupert visited the house alone.

"I have a message for you, Rassendyll," he said.

"If you do not know how to address the King, my brother must find another messenger," I replied coldly.

"Why do you continue to pretend?" he laughed. "We all know who you are."

"But you can't say that in public, can you? Because then people would know you've kidnapped the real King. You know the game's not finished yet, and until it is, I will choose my own name," I said. "So, what is your message?"

"The Duke offers you more than I would. He offers you a safe journey to the border and a million gold pieces."

"Tell the Duke that I refuse his generous offer. How's his prisoner, by the way?"

"He's still alive," said Rupert.

"Good, now go from here, while you can," I said.

Rupert gave me a cold look and asked his servant to prepare his horse. I followed him out of the house, and just as he was about to climb on his horse, he stopped and said, "Let's shake hands." He stepped nearer to me and suddenly **stabbed** me in the shoulder with his knife. I cried out, but Rupert rode off fast before I could do anything.

Although my shoulder hurt, I was lucky it was not a bad injury, though I was angry at letting myself fall for such a trick. I was put to bed and told to sleep, which I did for several hours. When I woke up, it was dark and I found Fritz beside me.

"The doctor says your arm will soon be better," he said. "And the good news is that your plan has worked, for the girl's brought Johann to the house. He's downstairs right now, and the strange thing is that I think Johann's happy to be here. He seems to know that if Michael's plan is successful, he'll be in trouble because he knows too much."

This made me think that Johann would be more useful to us than I had first thought. Surely with the right encouragement, he would make the perfect spy for us?

I went downstairs and asked to see Johann. The guards had brought him in with his hands tied behind his back. I sat him down in a chair, where he sat looking sad and afraid. As we talked to him, we understood that Johann was a weak man but not a **wicked** one. He said he worked for Michael because he was afraid of him, not because he liked him, and he seemed happy to tell me Michael's secrets.

He told us that there were two small rooms inside the castle, which you could only reach by crossing the drawbridge. The rooms were cut into the rock below the ground. One room had no windows, so it was always lit



by candles. Behind it was a second room with a small window, where the King was kept in chains. From the window, a large stone pipe led down to the castle moat. The first room was always guarded by three of the Six Men. They were told that, if some people attacked the first room and it was in danger of being taken, Detchard should go into the other room and kill the King. The body would then be put down the pipe and the weight of his chains would keep the body under water. Calling out to the other men, Detchard would then escape down the same pipe and swim across the moat. The other two men would then follow him and the Duke's horses would take them to safety. So anyone searching the castle would find nothing: just an empty room.

"What if many men attacked the castle?" I asked.

"They have another plan," he explained. "If the castle's attacked by a large group of soldiers, they would do the same thing, but one of the Six Men would take the King's place. So when Michael arrived at the castle, he could say that he was only keeping one of the Six Men as prisoner because he'd been rude to Antoinette de Mauban. No one would believe that the King was ever there."

"It's a very clever plan," said Sapt angrily. "It means that if we attack the castle quietly and secretly, or openly with a great army, the King will still be dead before we can save him. Rassendyll, I think that this time next year, you'll still be King."

My pulse quickened at the thought of remaining King forever. But without proving that Michael had killed the real King, the Duke would still be there, in his castle, waiting for his opportunity to take my place. I would never be safe.

"Does the King know about Michael's plan?" I asked Johann.

"Yes, and so does my brother, Max. He helped to put up the pipe to the prison window. It's not easy to sleep at the Castle of Zenda because no one feels safe. Everyone in it is a criminal, except the King."

"Thank you, Johann," I said to him. "You can go back to the castle now. If anyone asks you if there is a prisoner in the castle, you can say there is. But if anyone asks you who the prisoner is, do not answer. We can help you if you keep your promises, otherwise you'll never be safe again."

Johann bowed to me as he left. We hoped he could be trusted.

"So, what are we going to do now?" asked Sapt.

I thought long and hard. "There are two ways in which the King can come out of Zenda alive," I said. "One is if we have a **miracle**, and the other is if one of the Duke's men **betrays** him."

Chapter 7

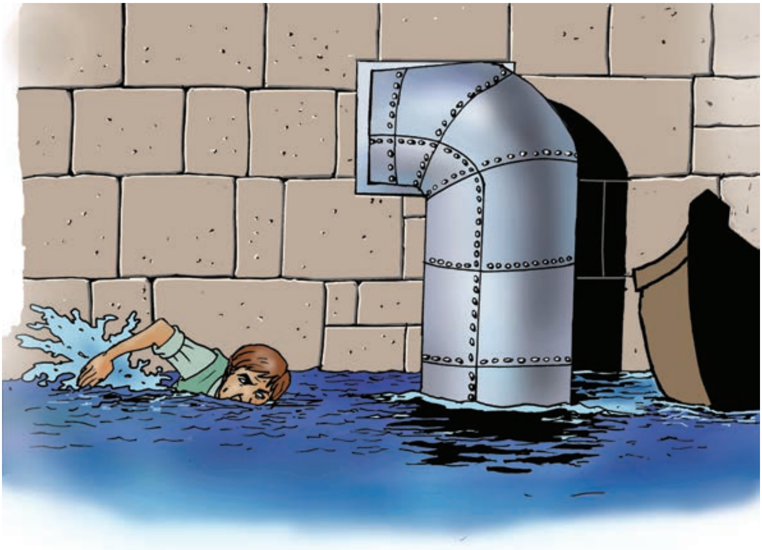
The next day, three pieces of news arrived at the Tarlenheim country house where we were staying. The first was that the people of Strelsau had heard I was badly injured while I was hunting in the woods, and they were worried. Secondly, the Duke also thought I was badly injured, although he understood better how I had got my injury. I heard this from Johann, who I now trusted and had allowed to go back to Zenda. Thirdly, Marshal Strakencz told me that Princess Flavia had ordered him to take her to see me.

When the Princess arrived at Tarlenheim, she was relieved to see that my injury was not serious. However, Johann told us shortly afterwards that the King was looking weak and ill, and we realised that we had to do something quickly. We could not wait any longer or he would surely die.

It was perhaps the strangest thing in the history of any country, that the King's brother and a pretend King, near a quiet country town during a time of peace, acted out a war for the life of a sick King, with just a few people knowing about it.

That night, after Princess Flavia had gone to bed, I changed my clothes and went outside to join Sapt and Fritz with seven men. We all had weapons and we rode our horses into a wet, windy night, taking a quiet back road towards the Castle of Zenda. It took us about an hour to get there. A few hundred metres from the castle, we asked the seven men to wait with the horses while we continued on foot up the hill to the moat around the castle. Here, Sapt tied a rope to a tree and I took off my boots, using the rope to climb down into the water.

Although the night was windy and wet, it had been a warm and sunny day and the water was not cold, and I swam without difficulty round the castle walls. I could hear voices inside the castle, but it was so dark that I did not think anyone could see me. I remembered what Johann had told me and thought I must now be near to the window to the King's room.



Then I saw the giant pipe that led from his window to the moat, and I was about to go nearer when I heard a noise.

I now saw there was a boat next to the pipe, and in the boat was a guard carrying a large gun. I went up to the boat as quietly as I could, then I saw that the guard was Max Holf, the brother of Johann. He was breathing slowly and deeply and I saw that he was asleep. I swam slowly and silently up to him and, though I hated to do it, this was war, so I stabbed him to death.

Now I had time to look carefully at the pipe. I soon realised that the bottom of the pipe was not fastened to the wall and I could see light coming from its far end. I tried to push it, and although the pipe was very heavy, it moved just a little. Then I heard voices: one was the King, and the other was a man with an English accent. It was Detchard.

"Time for your sleep," said the Englishman.

"Why doesn't my brother kill me now?" said the King in a weak voice.

"The Duke doesn't want you to die, not yet anyway. Sleep well!" said Detchard. Then the light disappeared and I could hear a door being locked. Now all I could hear was the King, quietly crying.

I realised nothing more could be done that night, so I climbed in the boat with Max dead at the bottom and rowed back to the rope. The wind was blowing hard now, so I did not worry that anyone would hear the boat. When I arrived next to the rope, I tied it round Max's body and asked Sapt to pull it up. Then I climbed back to my friends. Sapt **whistled** for our seven men to come and get us with the horses, but as they got nearer, we heard several shots and loud cries, and then a voice call out, "They've got me, Rupert! There are seven of them. Save yourself!"

We were running towards our men when a horse arrived with Rupert Hentzau on it. It was so dark that he did not see us, so I took a large stick and ran forward towards the horse's head. Now, surely we had him! But he was too quick. He waved a sword at me and cut my stick in half. I stepped back, and before we knew it, he had disappeared into the night.



I later found out that Lauengram and Krafstein were both killed by our men, although the fight had cost us three of our own men. We went home with heavy hearts for our friends, worried about the health of the King, and angry that Rupert had escaped.

***

The next day, I received a visit from the Chief of Police in Strelsau. He told me that the British Ambassador had reported that an Englishman called Rassendyll had disappeared near the town of Zenda. They had found his bags at a nearby train station, and a man called Mr Featherly from Paris believed he was travelling with Madame de Mauban. He asked if I knew the lady.

"Yes, I do," I replied. "I believe she and her servants were guests of Duke Michael."

"I see," said the policeman.

"Go back to Strelsau and tell the Ambassador what you know. I'll look into this for you," I told him. "Return in two weeks and I'll tell you what I've found." I wanted to have at least two weeks without any more difficult questions. My game had almost been discovered.

But with the policeman in town that day, there could be no more fighting around the castle, and Rupert clearly felt safe enough to ride out on his horse. When I saw him, I quickly caught up with him. He looked surprised to see me.

"How's my brother today?" I asked him.

"He's well," he replied. "He hopes he'll soon be in Strelsau."

"Rupert, you're young. Why are you doing this? If you let your prisoner go free, I can help you," I said to him. "You don't have to work for my brother." Rupert looked ahead of him and said nothing for a minute, then he spoke quietly.

"You may be right. Attack the castle bravely. I'll tell you when. But Fritz and Sapt must die, and so must Michael and the King. That will leave two men alive: you and me. You'll stay as the King, and I'll have a reward."

"Would you really work against Michael?" I asked him.

"He's not a good man," he replied. "He makes me angry. I nearly killed him myself last night. Think carefully about my plan." With that, he rode off down the road.

Later that day, Sapt could see that I was deep in thought, but I did not tell him what I was thinking. There was a knock at the door and a boy brought me a message. It read:

Johann will take this letter for me. I warned you before. The Duke discovered that I helped you that night in the summer house. He is now keeping me a prisoner in his mansion because he cannot trust me. Please, if you can, rescue me from this house of murderers.

Antoinette de Mauban

What could I do? Time went on and I knew that, for now, I could do nothing to help either Madame de Mauban or the King. I soon heard that the people in Strelsau did not like the fact that I had been away from them for so long. To keep them happy, my messengers told them that Flavia and I had arranged a date for our wedding, news which was greeted with great joy.

Not everyone wanted to know this news, however. Johann told me that the Duke was furious to hear about the wedding. At the same time, the King had become so ill that the Duke had asked for a doctor to examine him. The doctor advised him to set the King free at once, but the Duke refused, adding that the doctor would have to stay with him until he was better or died, whichever came first. Johann also told us that Antoinette de Mauban was helping to look after the King, who was guarded by two of the remaining Six Men at all times.

Although Johann did not want to return to the castle, we paid him well to go back and act as our spy. I found out from Johann where all the people stayed at night in the castle and the mansion, and who had the keys to the doors.

"I'll give you fifty thousand pieces of gold if you do what I ask you tomorrow night," I told Johann. "I hear there are new servants at the castle.

Do these servants know the King's a prisoner there?"

"No, they don't know who the prisoner is," he answered.

"So if they saw me, they'd think that I was the King?" I asked.

"Yes, they would, sir."

"Good. Tomorrow night, give this letter to Antoinette de Mauban. Then, at two o'clock in the morning, open the front door to the mansion. Ask no more questions. Now go."

When he was gone, I told Sapt and Fritz about my plan. It was our only chance to save the King. Sapt would take some men to the front door of the mansion. When Johann opened the door, they would quickly enter and tie up the servants if they did not want to help the King. At the same time, Madame de Mauban would cry out for help from her room. The Duke would surely come to see what was happening, and we could take him. Then there would only be two men left guarding the King, so we would need to move quickly before they hurt him.

Meanwhile, the house at Tarlenheim was to be filled with lights and music so that people believed we were having a ball. Marshal Strakencz would guard the house and the Princess and if, the next day, we had not returned, he would then march to the castle and ask to see the King at once. If the King was not there, he would quickly take Princess Flavia back to the capital where she would become Queen.

So that night, at midnight, Sapt took his men to the mansion. I rode alone a different way to the castle, with clothes to keep me warm, weapons and a rope. Half an hour later, I was back by the moat. I left my horse and gun in some trees, tied some rope to another tree and climbed down into the water once more. I swam back to the pipe below the window, but now the pipe was fastened to the wall and no light showed. I looked up at the mansion and saw that the lights were on in the windows to the Duke's and Madame de Mauban's rooms.

Then I heard voices and I saw Rupert walk towards the castle onto the drawbridge with De Gautet. "Let's go across before they lift the

drawbridge for the night," Rupert said. They walked across and shortly after, the bridge went up. A few minutes later, Rupert returned alone. He looked around him and then quietly climbed down some hidden steps to the moat and swam across. Then he climbed some steps opposite and disappeared back into the mansion. What was he doing? It seemed that I was not the only one who had a plan for that dark, warm night.

Chapter 8

It was cold waiting in the water of the moat, so when Rupert disappeared into the mansion, I slowly climbed out and waited by the drawbridge gate next to the castle. Now only Detchard, Bersonin and De Gautet were left to protect the King in his prison. If only I had the keys to the King's room, but I knew I had to be patient.

It was a quiet night and it was about one o'clock in the morning when there was a loud noise from the mansion. I looked up at one of the windows and saw a shadow walk across the light. A woman's voice cried, "Help! Michael, help me!" It was Antoinette de Mauban. This was exactly what I had asked her to say in my message to her, but it was around an hour too early, before my friends had reached the front door to the mansion, and before Johann had time to open it.

I pulled out my sword and stood ready for what might happen. Then I heard her calling again.

"Help, Michael! It's Rupert Hentzau!" called Antoinette.

Michael must have heard Antoinette de Mauban call out, because I then heard him running to help her with his servants. There was now a loud argument.

"This woman's been writing secret letters to Rassendyll!" I heard Rupert call out. "She needs to be punished!"

"She's my guest," I heard Michael say. "It's you who needs to be punished!"

There was a shout and a noisy sword fight began in the room. It was hard to see what was happening, but briefly I saw Rupert and Johann through the window. "That's for you, Johann!" Rupert called, striking his sword at him. "I know you're Rassendyll's spy!"

What had happened to Johann? What if he had been hurt? How could he open the door for our men? From the noises in the room, it seemed that Rupert was now fighting many men. Surely he would be caught. However,

at the next moment, there was a loud cry and Rupert jumped out of the window and down into the moat below, where he swam away. Somehow, he had escaped.

A minute later, De Gautet appeared in front of me, so I struck him with my sword and he fell to the ground. Quickly I looked through his clothes for the keys: there were three.

At last I could enter the room where the King was being kept prisoner. Opening the first door, I found myself at the top of some steps which led into a cold, dark room. The only light came from a small candle in one corner. As I walked down the steps, I could just hear voices coming from the room where the King was kept, behind a second door.

Carefully walking towards the door, I stepped back quickly when it was suddenly opened. Now I could hear Detchard speaking: "We mustn't kill him yet or there'll be trouble." When a person appeared, I struck him with my sword. It was Bersonin, who fell heavily to the ground. Understanding there was danger, Detchard closed the door fast: now surely he was alone in the room with the King and, remembering their plan, I knew the King was in real danger.

Taking one of the keys, I quickly unlocked the door to the second room and opened it nervously. I think I expected to see the King had already been killed, but once inside the room I was relieved to see that Detchard was being held by the King's doctor. The King, weak from illness and chained in one corner, looked on in fear. The doctor was too weak to hold Detchard for long, and before I could help him, Detchard broke free and killed the poor doctor with his sword.

Detchard turned to me and said, "At last!" I held up my sword and it was lucky that Detchard did not have a gun. We began to fight. He was a much better swordsman than me and knew all the tricks: he smiled when he cut me on the arm, and I would soon have died if the King had not helped me.

"My cousin Rudolf!" he cried, as if he only now realised who I was. He reached forward and pushed the legs of a chair into Detchard's body.

"Push hard!" I called. "Push against his legs!"

With the legs of the chair against him, Detchard found it hard to stand up. This made him angry, and he struck the King hard with his sword, but as he did so, he fell over the doctor's body. It was easy for me to kill him as he lay on the floor.

Was the King dead too? I ran to where he lay. How happy I was when the King **moaned**, so I knew he was alive, but before I could help him I heard Rupert somewhere outside the King's prison calling out, "Come on, Michael! Let's fight!"-

I tore a piece from my shirt to make a bandage for the cut on my arm, and quietly opening the prison door, I looked out. The drawbridge was now down once more. Rupert stood in the middle of the bridge with his sword, while the door to the mansion at the other end of the drawbridge was guarded by some very frightened-looking servants, as well as Johann, who I was pleased to see was unhurt. Then Antoinette de Mauban angrily called out from behind the servants, "The Duke's dead, you've already killed him!"

"Dead!" called Rupert. "That's good. Then I'm your leader now. Put down your weapons and do as I say."

Instead of putting down their weapons, however, the servants allowed Antoinette de Mauban to walk onto the bridge, and she was pointing a gun at Rupert. But before she had time to shoot — if, indeed, she planned to — Rupert once again jumped quickly into the water below the bridge.

More loud voices were heard and I realised that Sapt and his men must have finally arrived at the front door, on the other side of the mansion. Feeling confident that the King would be safe, I ran after Rupert and also jumped into the water. He swam faster than I could with my wounded arm, and he quickly swam to where the rope was tied to the tree above the moat. He looked surprised but pleased to see the rope and quickly climbed up. I was, perhaps, a minute behind him and once at the top of the rope, I could see him running off into the forest. At one stage I saw him look back at me. I thought I saw him waving, as if it were a game, as if he knew I would never catch him.



We both ran, further and further into the forest of Zenda, until I heard another cry. What had Rupert done now? Soon I discovered that he had found a boy riding to market, and had quickly pulled him from the horse and taken his place. Rupert was trying to get the boy to be quiet by giving him some money, and this gave me time to catch up with him.

"Stop!" I shouted.

He looked at me and smiled.

"What did you do at the castle?" he asked.

"I made sure that you are the last of the Six Men," I told him.

"Do you mean that you got inside the King's prison?" he asked with surprise.

"I did."

"And what's happened to the King?"

"He was hurt, but he's alive," I told him.

"Why didn't you follow my plan?" he said. "We could have worked well together."

"Get off your horse and fight like a man," I said.

I ran at Rupert with my sword, but still on his horse, he easily pushed me away with his own sword. I ran at him again and managed to cut his cheek, but now he rode at me with his sword held high. I would surely have been killed, but at that moment there was a shout as Fritz arrived on another horse carrying a gun. Rupert stopped and looked at us. He understood that he could not fight us both, so he turned the horse and rode away as fast as he could.

"Go after him!" I said to Fritz.

But Fritz was looking at me, not at Rupert. "Sir, you don't look well," he said, and I suddenly felt very weak. Fritz got off his horse and ran up to me as I fell to the ground.

"Is the King safe?" I asked him weakly.

"Thanks to you, he is," said Fritz. "But you're injured. Here, let me help you."

Next to us, the young boy looked on with wide eyes. "Isn't that the King?" he said, pointing at me. Fritz ignored him.

After a long rest, I felt strong enough to walk back, leaning heavily on Fritz's arm. I later learnt from Fritz and Antoinette de Mauban what happened that night at the castle and the events leading up to it. A few months earlier, the Duke had met Antoinette de Mauban in Paris and had asked her to Ruritania to see the coronation. She respected the Duke and was pleased to be his guest. However, some of the Duke's servants told her servants about the Duke's ambitions to be King. She did not like his evil plans and decided to warn me of everything he wanted to do.

When the Duke found out that she had warned me in Strelsau, he tricked Antoinette de Mauban by inviting her and her servants to his castle. Once she was there, he made sure they could not leave in order to stop her telling anyone about his plan.

Luckily, with Johann as our spy, Antoinette was still able to send us letters and we could use her position in the castle to help us. Somehow, however, Rupert discovered that she was helping us, so he wanted to punish her; by chance he chose the very night that we were attacking the castle.

When Michael came to see what was happening, Rupert killed him in the fight that followed. Rupert, it seemed, believed that without the Duke, I really would stay as the King and somehow reward him for his evil work. He did not understand that I was pretending to be the King for the good of Ruritania: he believed I wanted to be King forever.

Because Johann was helping the Duke, he could not open the front door for Sapt and his men at two o'clock, and it took a long time before they could finally enter the mansion. They did this just as Rupert was escaping from Antoinette de Mauban. Soon Sapt found the King lying in his prison, hurt but still alive. He was carried with his face covered to the mansion, where Antoinette helped to look after the poor King until another doctor could arrive. Meanwhile, Fritz came to look for me, knowing that I must have run off into the forest after Rupert.

Back at the castle, Colonel Sapt had to ask Johann and Antoinette de Mauban to guard the secret about the real King. His men and the servants thought that the King had been injured while rescuing the prisoner, who had gone after Rupert Hentzau. News was sent to Tarlenheim to tell the Princess that the King was hurt but alive, and that she should wait at Tarlenheim for him. The people of Strelsau also heard that the brave King had fought with his brother because he had kept a prisoner in Zenda who was a friend of the King. The Duke had tried to kill the King, who was injured, but the evil Duke had died.

However, Princess Flavia did not want to wait at Tarlenheim and asked Marshal Strakencz to take her to Zenda at once so she could see the King. Her coach was approaching the castle as Fritz led me back from the forest. When we saw the coach, I quickly hid behind a tree, but we did not realise that the boy whose horse Rupert had taken had followed us. He was very excited and called out, "Princess! The King's here, behind this tree!"

We tried to keep the boy quiet, but it was too late. The Princess's coach had stopped and I could see the Marshal **leaning** out of the coach window to talk to the boy.

"What you say is **nonsense**," called Strakencz. "The King's injured in the castle."

"No, really, he's here. He fought a man who took my horse."

At this moment, Sapt rode out of the castle to meet the party.

"This boy says the King's over there behind that tree," said Strakencz to Sapt with a strange look.

"No, he's in the castle behind me," said Sapt with a smile.

"Please, come and see if you don't believe me," said the boy.

The smile disappeared from Sapt's face and he looked worried, before quickly saying, "I'll go."

"Let me come, too," said the Princess.

Sapt thought for a moment, then said quietly, "Then come alone."

The Princess was helped down from the coach. She then walked with Sapt across the grass towards me. I sat down behind the tree, putting my hands over my face. Fritz put his hand on my shoulder.

When Princess Flavia saw me, she ran up and cried, "It is you! Are you hurt?" I said nothing, so she looked at Sapt and said, "What's this game you're playing?"

"This is not the King," said Sapt quietly.

"What do you mean it's not the King?" said the Princess.

"This is not the King," said Sapt again.

"He is the King!" cried Flavia. "It's his face! Rudolf, look at me! What's happening?"

Looking into her eyes, I said, "Forgive me, Madame. I'm not the King."

The Princess looked surprised, then frightened, and I could see she did not know what to say.

"Come," Sapt said gently to the Princess. "It's time you came into the castle. We have much to discuss."

I watched as she walked away. Now my game was nearly at an end.

All that day Fritz and I waited in the forest while the Princess stayed in the castle with the King. That night, when it was dark, Fritz led me to the castle where I stayed, unseen, in the rooms that had been the King's prison.

Johann brought me food and told me what he knew. The King was getting better and had seen the Princess with Sapt, and Marshal Strakencz had returned to Strelsau. Johann also said that everyone was talking about the strange prisoner of Zenda and who he could be. Some said he was an English friend of the King's who had heard about the Duke's plans, so the Duke had locked him up to stop him from speaking to the King.

Later that evening, Fritz came to me and said the King wanted to see me. So I went to his room, where he was lying in bed with a doctor next to him. He looked weak and tired, but smiled when he saw me.

"Cousin! My friend! You're injured, too. We're always the same, you and I!"

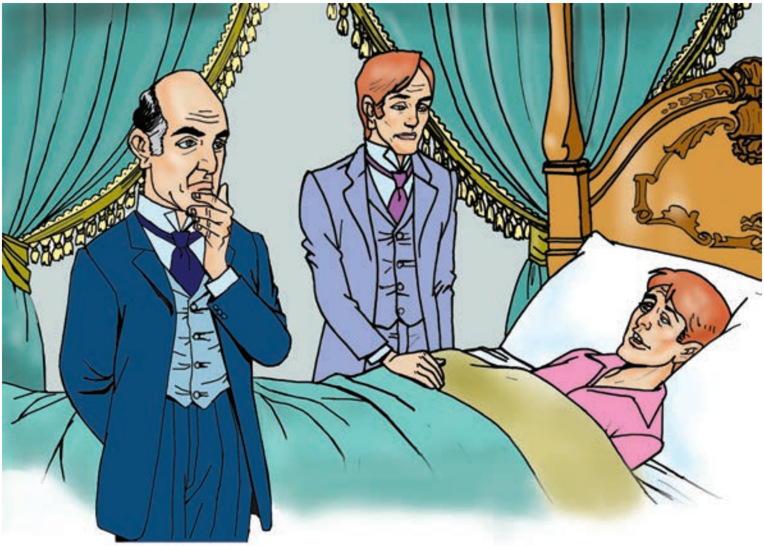
I smiled and bowed down before him.

"I want to thank you," he said. "I hoped that tomorrow, you'd come with me to Strelsau and tell everyone about the brave things that you've done, but Sapt tells me that this isn't possible."

"He's right, sir. My work in your country is complete."

"Very well, I'll return to Strelsau alone. People know that the King was injured, so they won't be surprised to see me looking a little different. But you've taught me something, cousin Rudolf. You've shown me what a true King should be," he said.

"I'd happily help you again, sir," I said. And I meant it, thinking that perhaps I would need to. Nobody knew where Rupert had disappeared to, and the thought of the man who had almost beaten me still makes my heart beat louder in my chest.



"The Princess has asked to see you, too," said the King. "She can come in now."

"Does she know everything?" I whispered, before she arrived.

"She does," the King answered.

The Princess came into the room and I bowed down to her.

"It seems you've tricked me," she said, but not unkindly.

"I would like to apologise to you for this," I said.

"You don't need to apologise. I should thank you for all you've done for Ruritania," she said.

"I've learned all about duties and responsibilities," I said to her. "It's a lesson I'll never forget."

"And we'll never forget how you've helped the King," she replied.

The King smiled, then closed his eyes and fell asleep, and the doctor said it was best if I left him.

I bowed and left the people who would shape the future of Ruritania, not knowing that I would never see the King, the Princess — or Rupert — ever again.

A few hours later, Sapt and Fritz bowed down to me as I got on a train at a small station near the border with Ruritania. The other passengers on the train must have thought an important person in a large coat and hat was about to leave their country, but it was only I, Rudolf Rassendyll, an English gentleman.

***

When I finally returned to England, I had some explaining to do. My brother Robert and his wife Rose told me that everyone had been looking for me. And Rose was very disappointed when I told her I had not written a book.

"At least the Ambassador has a job for you soon," she said. "He now knows which country he'll be sent to."

"Where's that?" I asked.

"Ruritania. Sir Jacob Borrodaile is to be the British Ambassador in Strelsau."

"I don't think it'd be a good idea for me to work there," I said.

"But you promised you'd take the job!" cried Rose.

"You're right, but please look at this," I said, showing them a photograph in a newspaper which showed the King's coronation. There was I, with Sapt, Fritz, Michael and the Princess. Robert and Rose looked at it in amazement.

"Yes, you look very like the King of Ruritania," said Rose. "But this is just an excuse. You could have become an ambassador yourself one day! If you don't go, you'll never be anyone important!"

I knew, however, that I did not need to go. I had been something far more important than an ambassador: I had been a King. I remembered and understood those words Rose had said to me all those months ago: a person

with a position in society has responsibilities. But even without a position in society, we all have a duty to help other people when we can, and we all become better people for doing so.

THE END

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER ONE

Pre-reading

1. This story is set in Europe in the 1890s. How did people travel then? How did they communicate between cities quickly?
2. What kinds of things did upper-class people do? Where did they get their money from if they didn't work?

Post-reading

A. Answer these questions.

1. Why doesn't Rudolf Rassendyll work?
2. What kind of work does Rose suggest Rudolf should do?
3. Why has the Rassendyll family been interested in the Elphberg family?
4. Where does Rassendyll decide to travel to? What does he tell his family about his plans?
5. What does the owner of the inn think of Michael Duke of Strelsau?
6. Why does Rassendyll decide to walk through the forest the next day?
7. Who does Rassendyll meet in the forest? Why are they surprised to see him?

B. Write True (T) or False (F). Correct the false statements.

1. ___ Rudolf is Lord Burlesdon.
2. ___ Rudolf speaks German as well as he speaks English.
3. ___ Many members of the Ruritanian royal family have red hair.
4. ___ George Featherly works at the embassy in Ruritania.
5. ___ The Duke of Strelsau is said to be a clever man.

6. ___ Rudolf sits with Antoinette on the train.
7. ___ Duke Michael has always lived in Ruritania.
8. ___ A moat goes around the Duke's mansion and his castle.
9. ___ Colonel Sapt recognises the name of Rassendyll.
10. ___ Rassendyll and the King look almost exactly alike.

C. Put these events in order.

___ Rassendyll travels to Paris.

___ Colonel Sapt and Fritz von Tarlenheim meet Rassendyll.

___ Countess Amelia marries someone from the royal family of Ruritania.

___ The King and Rassendyll meet each other.

___ Rudolf Rassendyll says he is going to go walking in the Alps.

___ Rassendyll and Antoinette de Mauban take the same train to Dresden.

___ Rassendyll sees the Castle of Zenda.

___ Rassendyll gets off the train at Zenda.

___ Rudolf Rassendyll studies at a German university.

___ Johann invites Rassendyll to stay with his family in Strelsau.

D. Match each item in A with an item in B.

A	B
1. Countess Rose	a. works in the British Embassy in Paris
2. Countess Amelia	b. Michael, half-brother of the future King of Ruritania
3. Antoinette de Mauban	c. an older man, a soldier, who works for the King
4. Lord Burlesdon	d. married a member of the Ruritanian royal family
5. George Featherly	e. the future King of Ruritania
6. Colonel Sapt	f. Robert, the brother of Rudolf Rassendyll
7. Johann	g. a wealthy and ambitious woman
8. Fritz von Tarlenheim	h. a younger gentleman who serves the King
9. Duke of Strelsau	i. the sister-in-law of Rudolf Rassendyll
	j. a servant of the Duke of Strelsau

E. Read the quotations and answer the questions.

◆ *"To a man like me, opportunities are responsibilities."*

1. Who says this and when?
2. What does the person mean by this?
3. Do you think a person like this is very serious about work or life?

◆ *"He's always lived in Ruritania and he cares about the people, so people like him."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Who is the person talking about?
3. What more does the speaker think about the person?

CHAPTER TWO

Pre-Reading

1. Recall why Rassendyll looks like the King of Ruritania.
2. Recall what you know about the personality of the King. Why don't many people know what he looks like?
3. What kinds of problems or adventures might there be for these two men who look so much alike?

Post-reading

A. Answer these questions.

1. Why do you think Fritz says that it is not a good time for Rassendyll to visit Strelsau? How does the King react to Fritz's suggestion, and what does that tell you about the King?
2. Why don't Fritz and Sapt eat very much? What advice do they give the King? Does he listen to them?
3. What happens at the end of the meal? What is the result the next day?
4. Why does the Duke poison the King?
5. Is Rassendyll also poisoned? Why isn't he as sick as the King?
6. Rassendyll tells himself that he has no choice but to pretend to be the King. Do you think he has a choice? Is there something else they can do?
7. How and when will they get the King to Strelsau?
8. Who overhears their plan? What do they do with the person?
9. Why do they go to the station early instead of waiting for Duke Michael's guards?
10. What is the first thing they do when they reach the capital? Why aren't the people from the palace at the station in Strelsau to meet them?

11. Why is Rassendyll afraid when he sees Antoinette de Mauban?

B. Write True (T) or False (F). Correct the false statements.

1. ___ Rassendyll's face is a little different from the King's face.
2. ___ The King invites Rassendyll to eat with him in Strelsau.
3. ___ Sapt and Fritz believe that Duke Michael has poisoned the King.
4. ___ Duke Michael wants to be the King.
5. ___ It is Rassendyll's idea to pretend to be the King for the coronation.
6. ___ Michael's men will hide the King in the cellar.
7. ___ They plan to bring the real King back to Strelsau that same night.
8. ___ Josef and Johann's mother are locked in the cellar.
9. ___ Marshal Strakencz realises that Rassendyll is not the King.
10. ___ Antoinette de Mauban calls out, "That is not the real King!"

C. Put these events in order.

___ Josef dresses Rassendyll in the King's clothes.

___ The King invites Rassendyll to have dinner with him.

___ Sapt throws water at Rassendyll to wake him up.

___ Rassendyll has breakfast.

___ Johann's mother and the King are locked in the cellar.

___ Colonel Sapt tells the King who Rassendyll is.

___ Sapt, Fritz and Rassendyll arrive in Strelsau.

___ Sapt asks Rassendyll to pretend to be the King.

___ Marshal Strakencz and Sapt ride with Rassendyll.

___ The King is poisoned.

D. Match each name in A with its description in B.

A	B
1. Strelsau	a. a servant of Colonel Sapt
2. Zenda	b. wants to be the King
3. Strakencz	c. pretends to be the King
4. Josef	d. the capital of Ruritania
5. Michael	e. place where the Duke of Strelsau has a castle
6. Johann's mother	f. an important person in the army
7. Rassendyll	g. a servant of the Duke
	h. a personal servant of the King

E. Read the quotations and answer the questions.

◆ *"Meanwhile, I'll have some breakfast! The King is hungry!"*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where and when does he say this?
3. What does this show you about the speaker?

◆ *"God save both Kings."*

1. Who said this and where was he?
2. What did the people say just before this?
3. Why does the speaker say "both Kings"? Who is he talking about?

CHAPTER THREE

Pre-reading

1. At the end of the last chapter, Rassendyll was just starting to ride through the city. Who did he see that might recognise him?

2. What do kings and their people usually do before and after a coronation? Do you think any of these will be especially dangerous for Rassendyll?

Post-reading

A. Answer these questions.

1. What kind of people live in the old part of the city? What does Rassendyll do when the Marshal wants him to ride through the old part of town?
2. Why is Sapt so anxious about Rassendyll's decision to ride alone through the old town?
3. Why does Duke Michael's face turn white when he sees "the King" (Rassendyll)?
4. Does Michael realise that this is not the real King? How do you know?
5. Does the Princess know that this is not the real King? What does she say about him?
6. Why do Rassendyll and Sapt need a permit to leave the city?
7. How do they get a permit from the King?
8. What does Fritz do while Sapt and Rassendyll go to Zenda?
9. How do Sapt and Rassendyll get out of the palace? Why do they go this way?
10. Who else is riding to Zenda? Which way do they go at the fork in the road? Which way do Sapt and Rassendyll go?
11. What do you think the message "all is well" means?
12. What do Sapt and Rassendyll find inside the lodge?
13. What does Sapt want Rassendyll to do?

B. Write True (T) or False (F). Correct the false statements.

1. ___ It is Marshal Strakencz's idea for the King to ride through the old part of town alone.
2. ___ Rassendyll decides to really act like a king.
3. ___ All the people smile and cheer the King.
4. ___ The Princess says that Rudolf looks different but she thinks he is the real King.
5. ___ Fritz thinks it is a good idea for Rassendyll "the King" to become popular with the people.
6. ___ Sapt tells Fritz that he may let Michael into the King's bedroom.
7. ___ Sapt and Rassendyll go out of the palace through a secret door.
8. ___ Sapt and Rassendyll are planning to set a trap at the hunting lodge.
9. ___ They find Josef and Johann's mother killed in the cellar.
10. ___ Sapt wants Rassendyll to leave Ruritania immediately.

C. Put these events in order.

___ Rassendyll finds the body of Josef.

___ The Duke takes the road to Zenda and his castle.

___ Sapt wants to worry Duke Michael some more.

___ Sapt and Rassendyll hear horses coming behind them.

___ Rassendyll is crowned King.

___ Rassendyll and Sapt leave the palace to get the real King.

___ Sapt stops and hides to see who is coming.

___ Rassendyll rides through the poor part of town without a close guard.

___ Rassendyll rides in a coach with the Princess.

___ They find torn and dirty handkerchiefs on the ground.

D. Match each name in A with its description in B.

A	B
1. Marshal Strakencz	a. knows that Rassendyll is not the real King and is angry
2. King Rudolf	b. rides with Duke Michael from Strelsau
3. Duke Michael	c. is kidnapped by Michael's men
4. Josef	d. thinks that Rassendyll is really the King
5. Johann's mother	e. is killed by Rassendyll and Sapt
6. Max Holf	f. is killed by Duke Michael's men
	g. is freed by Duke Michael's men

E. Read the quotations and answer the questions.

◆ *"Tell your soldiers to ride ahead of me. I don't need them or you. You can wait here until I've continued through the old town alone."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where are they and when is this?
3. Why does the speaker say this?

◆ *"You mustn't try too hard. I'm not sure it was a good idea to ride alone through the old town. Duke Michael won't like it if you become too popular with his people, you know."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where and when is this said?
3. Why did the person ride alone through the old town and why won't Duke Michael like it if the person becomes too popular?

◆ *"If all's well, why go there? And if all isn't well, I fear there'll be a trap."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where are they?
3. What is "there"? What do you think he means by "all's well"?

◆ *"We'll go back to Strelsau. The King will be back in the capital again tomorrow!"*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where are they and what has happened?
3. How will the King be back in the capital tomorrow?

CHAPTER FOUR

Pre-reading

1. At the end of the last chapter, Sapt asked Rassendyll to continue to be the King. Do you think Rassendyll will do it?
2. What do you think has happened to the real King? What do you think will happen in the next few days?

Post-reading

A. Answer these questions.

1. What does Sapt plan to do if the real King is dead?
2. Why do Michael's men have spades? What does it mean that they were going to "hide their evil work"?
3. What does Rassendyll mean that some of those evil men should join Josef?
4. Why does Sapt say to the servant at the secret door "All young men like to ride their horses now and then, so why not the King?"
5. Why does Rassendyll use a new servant who has never met the real King? Who is the servant replacing?

6. Who are the Six Men? Where are they from? Why are only three in Strelsau?
7. Rassendyll decides to keep some of his plans secret from Sapt and Fritz. What are those plans?
8. Why does he visit the Princess? What does he do on the way? How do these things make him more popular?
9. Why can't Michael come into the room when the King is there? What mistake does Rassendyll make? How does he cover up his mistake?
10. Rassendyll says that his hand was hurt from an animal bite and that he's waiting to see if the bite is poisonous. He also says that he is sure the animal will try to bite again. Who is he really talking about, and who understands this?
11. How does Rassendyll know that the Six Men also know his secret?

B. Write True (T) or False (F). Correct the false statements.

1. ___ The Duke's men come to the hunting lodge to kill Sapt and Rassendyll.
2. ___ One of Michael's men thinks that Rassendyll is the King.
3. ___ Fritz thinks at first that the real King has returned.
4. ___ Rassendyll finds the work of being a King easy.
5. ___ Fritz wants to hurry and make plans to attack Michael.
6. ___ Rassendyll tells all of his plans to Sapt and Fritz.
7. ___ Rassendyll wants to make Michael angry by not asking him to enter the room.
8. ___ Rassendyll's hand is hurt because he was bitten by an animal.
9. ___ Rassendyll meets the Six Men.
10. ___ Rassendyll realises that Michael's Six Men also know that he is not the real King.

C. Put these events in order.

___ "King" Rassendyll meets some of the Six Men.

___ Rassendyll agrees to continue to pretend to be the King.

___ Duke Michael comes to the Princess's palace.

___ Fritz sees Rassendyll and thinks he is the King.

___ "King" Rassendyll meets the French Ambassador.

___ Rassendyll begins to worry about his own safety.

___ Sapt and Rassendyll attack some of the Duke's men.

___ Rassendyll meets with Princess Flavia.

___ Rassendyll warns Michael not to bite again.

___ Rassendyll decides on a plan to make himself popular.

D. Match each name in A with its description in B.

A	B
1. Detchard	a. a Frenchman, one of the Six Men
2. De Gautet	b. wants to attack Duke Michael right away
3. Bersonin	c. wants to be more cautious with Duke Michael
4. Fritz	d. a Ruritanian, one of the Six Men
5. Sapt	e. one of the Six Men, an Englishman
	f. a Belgian, one of the Six Men

E. Read the quotations and answer the questions.

◆ *"You're mad! The plan's too dangerous!"*

1. Who says this to whom?

2. Where are they?

3. What is the dangerous plan?

◆ *"We've got them! They can't say anything without showing their guilt."*

1. Who says this to whom?

2. Why does he say this?

3. Who is "them"? What does the speaker mean by "We've got them"?

◆ *"Now remember, say nothing about this. All young men like to ride their horses now and then, so why not the King?"*

1. Who says this to whom?

2. Where is the speaker coming from and who is with him?

3. Why does the speaker say this?

CHAPTER FIVE

Pre-reading

1. At the end of the last chapter, Rassendyll was visiting with Princess Flavia and was joined by Duke Michael. Recall what Rassendyll told them about his injured hand and what he really meant by it.

2. Who else did Rassendyll meet at the end of the chapter, and why was he worried? What do you think might happen?

Post-reading

A. Answer these questions

1. Rassendyll has never liked responsibilities. Now he has many. What responsibilities does he have?

2. Why does Rassendyll become good at pretending he has forgotten rules or people he has met? How does that prevent people from noticing that he is not the real King? What else do you think helps him not to be discovered?

3. Sapt brings news of the real King. What is it?

4. Why does Rassendyll want to go to Zenda? What does Sapt mean when he says "You'll probably stay there forever if you do"?

5. Why does Sapt have Rassendyll followed everywhere? What does he mean by "If you disappear, the game's over"?

6. Who writes a letter to Rassendyll and what does it say? Who does he suspect really wrote it?
7. When Rassendyll talks to Detchard at the summer house, what does Detchard offer him? Why doesn't Rassendyll accept it?
8. How does Rassendyll come out of the summer house alive?
9. Why have they prepared a ball for the Princess?
10. Rassendyll tells the Princess that when he was younger, he thought he didn't need to worry about society. Why does he say this? How does the Princess react? Why is it a mistake for him to say this?
11. The day after the ball, the Princess receives two letters. What are they and who are they from?
12. What does Rassendyll do when he hears of these letters? Who does he go to?
13. What does Rassendyll tell Marshal Strakencz to do?

B. Write True (T) or False (F). Correct the false statements.

1. ___ Rassendyll is sad to say goodbye to Duke Michael and his men.
2. ___ No one goes into the castle without Rupert or Michael's permission.
3. ___ The letter tells the King to come to the summer house with a friend.
4. ___ Rassendyll tells Sapt he can come but he must wait outside the summer house.
5. ___ Michael plans to kill Rassendyll, arrest Sapt and Fritz, and kill the real King.
6. ___ Rassendyll runs out the door holding a table to protect himself.
7. ___ Detchard is wounded in the leg by Rassendyll's bullet.
8. ___ At the ball, Rassendyll tells the Princess that he is not the real King.

9. ___ Duke Michael invites the Princess to visit him in Zenda and she accepts.
10. ___ Strakencz is ordered to immediately become the head of Strelsau.

C. Put these events in order.

___ Princess Flavia receives a letter from Antoinette de Mauban.

___ Rassendyll shoots Detchard while escaping.

___ Rassendyll receives a letter from Antoinette de Mauban.

___ Rassendyll nearly tells the Princess who he really is.

___ Rassendyll orders the Marshal to guard the Princess.

___ Antoinette tells Rassendyll Michael's plan.

___ The Duke of Strelsau leaves the capital.

___ Rassendyll tells the Marshal he is leaving Strelsau.

___ A ball is held for the Princess.

D. Match each name in A with its description in B.

A	B
1. Detchard	a. works for Marshal Strakencz
2. Rassendyll	b. will be the head of Strelsau if no message comes from the King for three days
3. Sapt	c. warns people about Duke Michael
4. Duke Michael	d. nearly tells the Princess the truth about the King
5. Antoinette	e. will be the ruler of Ruritania if the King is dead
6. Strakencz	f. will be arrested if Rassendyll is killed
7. Princess Flavia	g. works for Duke Michael
	h. wants to kill Rassendyll and the real King

E. Read the quotations and answer the questions.

◆ *"It would be very useful for Michael if you disappeared. And if you disappear, the game's over."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Why does the speaker say this?
3. What game would be over if the person disappeared? Explain.

◆ *"I also have a game to play. I'll tell the Duke's men that you never came. If the Duke doesn't find out what I've done, we may meet again."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where are they?
3. What has the speaker done that the Duke shouldn't find out?

◆ *"But you always knew that you would become King. How could you think that was someone else's job?"*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where are they?
3. This was said in reaction to the other person's words. What did the other person say before this?

◆ *"Every evening, I'll send you a message. If you don't get a message for three days, you have the authority to say that you are now the head of Strelsau."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. When is this said?
3. What other orders does the speaker give?

CHAPTER SIX

Pre-reading

1. At the end of the last chapter, "King" Rassendyll went to Marshal Strakencz and asked him to do something. What was it?
2. How do you think Rassendyll plans to rescue the King?

Post-reading

A. Answer these questions.

1. Rassendyll's writing is different from the King's. What reason does Rassendyll give? Why might this difference be a problem for Marshal Strakencz?
2. What reason does Rassendyll give Princess Flavia for leaving Strelsau? What does he ask her to do if he doesn't come back?
3. Where do Rassendyll and his men stay for their hunting trip? Where is it and who does it belong to?
4. What reason does Duke Michael give for not visiting "King" Rassendyll or inviting him to his castle?
5. Why do Rassendyll and Fritz go to the inn at Zenda? Who do they talk to there and what do they say?
6. What happens to Bernenstein while Fritz and Rassendyll are out?
7. What message does Rupert Hentzau bring the next day? How does Rassendyll reply? What happens when Rupert is leaving?
8. What do they learn from Johann?
9. Describe the room and the pipe where the real King is being kept.
10. What is the plan if they are attacked? How will they kill the King and what will they do with the body?
11. Why do they send Johann back to the castle?

B. Write True (T) or False (F). Correct the false statements.

1. ___ Duke Michael cannot legally become King unless he marries Princess Flavia.
2. ___ Rassendyll's writing is different from the real King's writing.
3. ___ Fritz owns the country house called Tarlenheim.
4. ___ The ten brave and strong gentlemen know that Rassendyll is not the real King.
5. ___ Duke Michael visits Rassendyll at Tarlenheim.
6. ___ The innkeeper's daughter says that she thought Rassendyll was the King when he stayed with them.
7. ___ Johann works for the Duke because he loves him.
8. ___ If the Duke kills the King, he will put the body with chains on it into the moat.
9. ___ The Castle of Zenda is a happy place.
10. ___ Rassendyll thinks it will be easy to rescue the King.

C. Put these events in order.

___ Fritz and Rassendyll return from the inn.

___ Rassendyll, Sapt, Fritz and ten gentlemen go to Tarlenheim.

___ Johann tells them the Duke's plans for the King.

___ Bernenstein is shot in the arm while in the woods.

___ The Ruritanian Six Men visit Rassendyll at Tarlenheim.

___ Rupert Hentzau comes with an offer from the Duke.

___ Rassendyll writes some orders for Marshal Strakencz.

___ Rupert Hentzau stabs Rassendyll.

___ Rassendyll tells Princess Flavia that he is going hunting.

___ Rassendyll meets with Johann.

D. Match each name in A with its description in B.

A	B
1. Bernenstein	a. gets a message to Johann
2. Hentzau	b. helps to put up the pipe to the prison window
3. innkeeper's daughter	c. is shot by the Duke's men while in the woods
4. Johann	d. is shot by Rassendyll at the summer house
5. Max	e. stabs Rassendyll in the shoulder
	f. tells about the Duke's plans

E. Read the quotations and answer the questions.

◆ *"The writing's a little different from your usual. I hope people know it's a real order from the King."*

1. Who says this to Rassendyll (the King)?
2. What does he think is the reason that the handwriting is different? What is the real reason?
3. Why is it important that the handwriting be the same?

◆ *"So you'd prefer to hunt animals than do your duties in the capital?"*

1. Who says this to Rassendyll?
2. When does the person say this?
3. What "animal" is Rassendyll going to hunt?

◆ *"If you do not know how to address the King, my brother must find another messenger."*

1. Who does Rassendyll say this to?
2. Where are they?
3. Why does he say this?

◆ *"Rassendyll, I think that this time next year, you'll still be King."*

1. Who says this?
2. What has he just heard?
3. Why does he think Rassendyll will still be King after a year?

CHAPTER SEVEN

Pre-reading

1. Recall what Rupert Hentzau offered to Rassendyll in the last chapter, and what Rupert did to him.
2. Recall what Johann told Rassendyll about the King's prison in the castle. How do you think they might try to rescue the King?

Post-reading

A. Answer these questions.

1. What three pieces of news arrive at Tarlenheim the next day?
2. Why do Rassendyll and the others go to the castle at night?
3. Why does Rassendyll kill Max Holf?
4. Why do the seven gentlemen go with Rassendyll, Sapt and Fritz to the castle? What do they do?
5. Who gets killed in the fight in the woods? Who gets away?
6. Why were Rassendyll's bags found at a train station near Zenda? Why is the Chief of Police looking for Mr Rassendyll?
7. Rassendyll meets Rupert the next day while they are out riding. What plan does Rupert offer to Rassendyll?
8. Why is Antoinette de Mauban being kept as a prisoner of the Duke?
9. A doctor has been brought to see the real King in his prison. Why doesn't Duke Michael let the doctor leave?

10. Why does Rassendyll ask Antoinette de Mauban to cry out for help at two o'clock in the morning?
11. Why does Rupert Hentzau swim across the moat to go back to the mansion? Why doesn't he use the drawbridge?

B. Write True (T) or False (F). Correct the false statements.

1. ___ The Duke thinks that Rassendyll was injured while hunting.
2. ___ The real King is weak and ill.
3. ___ Max Holf sees Rassendyll near the pipe.
4. ___ One of Rassendyll's men calls out, "They've got me, Rupert!"
5. ___ Two of Rassendyll's men are killed.
6. ___ The British Ambassador reports that an Englishman has disappeared near Zenda.
7. ___ Rassendyll does not want the Chief of Police to ask about him because he might discover the truth about the King.
8. ___ Rupert offers to help rescue the King.
9. ___ Antoinette de Mauban asks Rassendyll to rescue her from the Duke.
10. ___ Rassendyll tells Johann to open the front door of the mansion at midnight.

C. Put these events in order.

___ The date of the wedding of the King and Princess is announced.

___ The Princess comes to Tarlenheim to see the King.

___ Rupert Hentzau offers to help Rassendyll remain King.

___ Rassendyll kills Max Holf in the boat.

___ Rassendyll and his men go to the castle to rescue the King.

___ Rassendyll looks at the big pipe carefully.

___ Rassendyll makes a plan to rescue the King.

___ Madame de Mauban asks for help.

___ The Chief of Police asks about Mr Rassendyll.

___ The house at Tarlenheim is filled with lights and music.

D. Match each name in A with its description in B.

A	B
1. George Featherly	a. is looking for a missing Englishman
2. Chief of Police	b. is seen by Rassendyll crossing the drawbridge then swimming back
3. Rupert Hentzau	c. one of the Six Men who is killed by Rassendyll's men
4. Max Holf	d. is seen by Rassendyll only crossing the drawbridge
5. De Gautet	e. is treating the King for his illness
6. Lauengram	f. believes Rassendyll travelled with Madame de Mauban
	g. is killed while sleeping

E. Read the quotations and answer the questions.

◆ *"Go back to Strelsau and tell the Ambassador what you know. I'll look into this for you."*

1. Who does Rassendyll say this to?
2. What is it that Rassendyll will look into?
3. Why doesn't he want the Chief of Police to investigate about the missing man?

◆ *"I hear there are new servants at the castle. Do these servants know the King's a prisoner there?"*

1. Who says this to Johann?
2. What does Johann answer?

3. Why is that important?

◆ *"He makes me angry. I nearly killed him myself last night. Think carefully about my plan."*

1. Who says this to Rassendyll?
2. Who is the person talking about?
3. What is the person's plan?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Pre-reading

1. At the end of the last chapter, Rupert Hentzau went back to the mansion secretly. What do you think he is going to do?
2. Recall Rassendyll's plan and where Rassendyll was at the end of the last chapter. Do you think everything will go as planned? Do you think they will rescue the King?

Post-reading

A. Answer these questions.

1. Where does Rassendyll wait for it to be two o'clock?
2. Rassendyll has asked Antoinette to cry for help at two o'clock. Why does she do it earlier?
3. Why does Rassendyll kill De Gautet with a sword and not with a gun?
4. How does Rassendyll get the keys to the King's prison?
5. Who gets killed in the first room of the King's prison? Who gets killed in the room where the King is? Who gets wounded?
6. Why doesn't the King fight Detchard directly? How does he help Rassendyll?
7. Who kills the Duke?

8. Why does Rupert ride away instead of fighting Rassendyll?
9. How does the boy make a problem for Sapt, Fritz and Rassendyll? Why does Sapt tell the Princess to come alone to see the King behind the tree?
10. Why does Sapt have the real King taken from his prison with his face covered? What do Sapt's men and the servants think happened to the King and to the prisoner? Why does Rassendyll wait in the forest until dark to go to the castle?
11. How does Rassendyll teach the King how to be a real king?
12. What does Rassendyll mean when he writes "Nobody knew where Rupert had disappeared to, and the thought of the man who had almost beaten me still makes my heart beat louder in my chest"?
13. Do you think Rassendyll was right to pretend to be the King for the coronation? Was he right to continue to pretend to be the King for so long?
14. Why doesn't Rassendyll remain the King? If he was a wiser and better ruler than the real King, would it be wrong for him to remain King?
15. What does Rassendyll learn from his adventures?

B. Write True (T) or False (F). Correct the false statements.

1. ___ Antoinette de Mauban calls for help at the appointed time.
2. ___ Johann is not seriously hurt in the fighting.
3. ___ When Rassendyll enters the prison, De Gautet and Hentzau are there.
4. ___ The doctor tries to protect the King.
5. ___ The Duke's servants do not accept Rupert as their leader.
6. ___ Rassendyll does not wound Rupert before he escapes.
7. ___ Rupert thinks that if the Duke is dead, Rassendyll will remain King and reward him.

8. ___ Johann and Antoinette know that the prisoner was the King.
9. ___ Rassendyll spends the day in the mansion in the room with the King.
10. ___ The King wants Rassendyll to come to Strelsau.
11. ___ Back home, Rassendyll agrees to work with Sir Jacob Borrodaile.

C. Put these events in order.

I.

___ Rassendyll kills Bersonin and Detchard in the prison.

___ Rupert and Michael fight when Rupert wants to punish Antoinette.

___ The Duke invites Antoinette to his castle and doesn't let her leave.

___ Rupert takes a horse from a boy in order to escape.

___ Rupert stands on the bridge and calls to Michael, not knowing he is dead.

___ Antoinette points a gun at Rupert.

___ Rupert discovers that Antoinette is helping Rassendyll.

___ The Duke invites Antoinette to Ruritania for the coronation.

___ Rupert and Rassendyll fight briefly before Fritz comes.

___ The Duke learns that Antoinette warned Rassendyll in the summer house.

II.

___ Some of the Duke's men try to kill Rassendyll in Strelsau.

___ Sapt and Rassendyll try to get the King, but he is gone.

___ Antoinette and Rassendyll travel on the same train to Ruritania.

___ Rassendyll returns to England but tells his family nothing of his adventure.

___ The King is poisoned and Rassendyll pretends to be him for the coronation.

___ People are told that the rescued prisoner was a friend of the King.

___ The King is taken prisoner by the Duke's men.

___ Rassendyll tells his family he is travelling in the Alps.

___ Rassendyll meets the King and has dinner with him.

___ Rassendyll goes to Zenda and rescues the King.

D. Match each name in A with its description in B.

A

1. Sapt's men
2. Johann and Antoinette
3. De Gautet, Bersonin and Detchard
4. Hentzau
5. Marshal Strakencz
6. Rassendyll
7. Rose

B

a. thinks Rassendyll will never be anyone important

b. teaches the King how to be a real king

c. are told that the King was wounded while fighting to rescue the prisoner

d. brings the Princess from Tarlenheim to see the King

e. know that the prisoner was the real King but promise not to tell

f. killed by Rassendyll

g. escapes and is not seen again

h. tells the Princess that the King is behind a tree

E. Read the quotations and answer the questions.

◆ *"This woman's been writing secret letters to Rassendyll! She needs to be punished!"*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Who is "this woman"?
3. What is the speaker doing while saying this?

◆ *"Dead! That's good. Then I'm your leader now. Put down your weapons and do as I say."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where is the speaker?
3. Do the people obey him? What happens?

◆ *"Why didn't you follow my plan? We could have worked well together."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where are they and what has just happened?
3. What was the plan that wasn't followed?

◆ *"I hoped that tomorrow, you'd come with me to Strelsau and tell everyone about the brave things that you've done, but Sapt tells me that this isn't possible."*

1. Who says this to whom?
2. Where are they?
3. What do these words tell you about the speaker's character and the speaker's relationship with Sapt?

Characters
(In the order mentioned)

Rudolf Rassendyll /'ruːdɒlf 'ræsəndɪl/ A wealthy English gentleman and the narrator of the story

Rose Rassendyll /rəʊz 'ræsəndɪl/ Rudolf Rassendyll's sister-in-law

Robert Rassendyll (Lord Burlesdon) /'rɒbət 'ræsəndɪl/ /lɔːd 'bɜːlsdən/ Rudolf Rassendyll's brother

Sir Jacob Borrodaile /sɜː 'dʒeɪkəb 'bɒrədeɪl/ An important Englishman who is about to become an ambassador

Countess Amelia Rassendyll /'kaʊntes ə'miːliːjə 'ræsəndɪl/ A relative of the Rassendylls who married into the Ruritanian royal family in 1733

Rudolf Elphberg /'ruːdɒlf 'elfbɜːg/ The King, Rudolf the Fifth of Ruritania

George Featherly /dʒɔːdʒ 'feðəliː/ An English friend of Rudolf Rassendyll who works in the Paris embassy

Bertram Bertrand /'bɜːtrəm 'bɜːtrənd/ An English journalist who works in Paris

Antoinette de Mauban /æntwə'net də 'məʊbæn/ A wealthy French lady

Duke Michael Elphberg /dyuːk 'maɪkəl 'elfbɜːg/ **(the Duke of Strelsau)** /'strelsaʊ/ Rudolf Elphberg's half-brother

Johann Holf /'jəʊhæn hɒlf/ A servant who works in the Castle of Zenda

Colonel Sapt /'kɜːnəl sæpt/ An old soldier who works for the King of Ruritania

Fritz von Tarlenheim /frɪts vɒn 'tɑːlənhaɪm/ A gentleman who works for the King of Ruritania

Josef /'jəʊsef/ A servant to the King of Ruritania

Marshal Strakencz /'mɑːʃəl 'strækentʃ/ An important person in the King of Ruritania's army

Princess Flavia /prɪnses flævɪjə/ A royal cousin to Rudolf Elphberg and Michael Elphberg

Max Holf /mæks hɒlf/ Johann's brother who works for Duke Michael

Freyler /'fraɪ lə/ a servant at the King's palace

De Gautet /də 'gaʊ'tet/ A Frenchman, one of Duke Michael's Six Men (special soldiers who are loyal to him)

Bersonin /beə'səʊnɪn/ A Belgian, one of Duke Michael's Six Men (soldiers who are loyal to him)

Detchard /'detʃaːd/ An Englishman, one of Duke Michael's Six Men (special soldiers who are loyal to him)

Lauengram /'laʊngræm/ A Ruritanian, one of Duke Michael's Six Men (special soldiers who are loyal to him)

Krafstein /'kræfstɑiːn/ A Ruritanian, one of Duke Michael's Six Men (special soldiers who are loyal to him)

Rupert Hentzau /'ruːpət 'henzaʊ/ A Ruritanian, the most dangerous of Duke Michael's Six Men (special soldiers who are loyal to him)

Bernenstein /'beːnenstɑiːn/ A trusted gentleman, one of those who help to rescue the King

Places

Dresden /'drezdən/

Ruritania /rʊərɪ'teɪniːjə/

Strelsau /'strelsaʊ/

Tarlenheim /'tɑːlənhaɪm/

Zenda /'zendə/

Glossary

accent	a way of pronouncing words that someone has because of where they were born or live
ambassador	an important official that a government sends to another country to manage its relations with that country
anxious	very worried about something that may happen
authority	the power or right to make important decisions and control people
betray	to behave dishonestly towards someone who loves you, trusts you, or supports you, or do something that will cause problems for them
candle	a stick of wax that you burn to produce light
care (about)	to be concerned about or interested in someone or something
cheer	to shout approval, encouragement etc.
delighted	very pleased and excited about something
descendant	someone who is related to a person who lived long ago
document	a piece of paper that has official information written on it
double	someone who looks very similar to someone else
doubt	the feeling that something is not true or that someone cannot be trusted
drawbridge	a bridge that can be pulled up, for example to prevent people getting into a castle
duty	something that you have to do because it is right or it is part of your job
embassy	the building where a group of officials deal with their country's affairs in a foreign country
fashionably	in a way that is popular or thought to be good at a particular time
fork	a place where a road or river divides into two parts
French window	a large glass door

gap	a space between two things
guilt	when someone has broken a law
hunting	the activity of chasing animals in order to catch and kill them
imprisoned	put in prison or kept in a place someone cannot escape from
iron	a common heavy metal
joyous	making people very happy
lean	to move or bend your body in a particular position
lodge	a place in the country where people can stay for a short time, especially in order to do an outdoor activity
loyal	always faithful to a person, set of beliefs, or country
mansion	a very large house
miracle	an action or event that seems impossible and is thought to be caused by God
moan	a long low sound made by someone who is in pain or very unhappy
moat	a deep wide hole, usually filled with water, that is dug around a castle in order to defend it
moreover	used when you give additional information which supports something that you have just said
nevertheless	in spite of what has just been mentioned
nonsense	statements or opinions that are not true or seem very stupid
panel	a piece of wood, glass etc that is part of a door, wall or ceiling
passage	a narrow area with walls on each side, that connects one room or place to another
personality	someone's character, especially the way they behave towards other people
pulse	the regular beat made by your heart when it is moving blood around your body
relieved	happy because something bad did not happen or you are no longer worried about something

reluctantly	in a way that shows you are unwilling to do something
risk	the possibility that something bad may happen
royal	relating to or belonging to a king or queen
shade	an area that is less warm and darker because the light of the sun cannot reach it
signature	your name written the way you usually write it, for example on a cheque
spade	a tool with a long handle and a wide flat part at the end used for digging
splendid	very good
stab	to push a knife into someone
stalemate	the situation when neither side in an argument, battle etc can make progress or win
stare	to look at someone or something for a long time without moving your eyes
sword	a weapon with a long sharp blade and a handle
swordsman	someone who is trained to use a sword
tear/tore/torn	to pull paper or cloth into pieces, or accidentally make a hole in it
tick	if a clock or watch ticks, it makes a short sound every second
tough	physically strong and not easily frightened
trap	a trick that is intended to catch someone or make them do something that they do not want to do
trust	to believe that someone is honest and will not lie to you or harm you
whisper	to say something very quietly to someone, so that other people cannot hear
whistle	to make a high sound or tune by blowing air out through your lips
wicked	behaving in a way that is morally very bad; evil
wonder	to think about something and want to know why it is true, what happened, etc